5-2015

Everything Leaves a Trace: D. H. Lawrence, Modernism, and the English *Bildungsroman* Tradition

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Everything Leaves a Trace: D. H. Lawrence, Modernism, and the English *Bildungsroman* Tradition

A Thesis Presented for the
Master of Arts
Degree
The University of Tennessee, Knoxville

Justin Miles McGee
May 2015

Dedication

To

Brooke and *Julia*

Acknowledgments

I want to thank Dr. Urmila Seshagiri for guiding me through my research and supporting me throughout the writing process. Without her thoughtful feedback and encouragement, this thesis would not have been possible. I would also like to express my sincerest appreciation to my other committee members, Drs. Lisi Schoenbach and Allen Dunn. I also appreciate the support of my fellow graduate students in the UTK English Department. I am especially grateful for my friend and colleague Hannah Widdifield.

Abstract

During the transition from the nineteenth to the twentieth-century, the *Bildungsroman* acted as a vehicle for artists' reflections on the turbulent time. The *Bildungsroman* is especially well suited to capture the fragmentation and disillusionment characteristic of modernism because of its sensitivity to the community's role in the individual's social normalization. D. H. Lawrence's autobiographical novel *Sons and Lovers* (1913) embodies the jarring transition from the world of the Victorian *Bildungsroman* to modernity. While Lawrence's novel still relies on characteristics of the Victorian *Bildungsroman*, it makes a significant attempt to break away from the Victorian *Bildungsroman*. Lawrence uses the burgeoning field of psychoanalysis to inform protagonist Paul Morel's development from adolescence to adulthood. Freud's theories ground the tension between the individual and civilization in psychological terms and offer an explanation for its origin. If modernism's creed is to make it new, as Ezra Pound suggests, *Sons and Lovers* stands as Lawrence's attempt to reinvent and redirect the English *Bildungsroman*. Later modernist writers like James Joyce and Virginia Woolf take up the *Bildungsroman* and create a distinctly modern iteration of the genre that reveals and highlights the artist's unique position in his/her community through incorporating psychoanalytic theories to create a more realistic depiction of the protagonist's psyche. But Lawrence's *Sons and Lovers* represents a pivotal moment in the history of the *Bildungsroman* as well as in the development of modern literature.

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I. Development in the Modern World

> Joyfully let us turn, instead, from the golden harvests of bygone years to the invigorating green of the growing crop!
>
> - Karl Morgenstern, "On the Nature of the *Bildungsroman*"

Early in D. H. Lawrence's autobiographical novel, *Sons and Lovers* (1913), Gertrude Morel asks her son Paul, the novel's protagonist, what he wants to be. Paul answers, "Anything." Displeased, Mrs. Morel responds, "That is no answer" (114). Gertrude expects that Paul, like his older brother William, will be eager to begin his professional life, but Paul is surprisingly hesitant. Though this exchange between mother and son is a relatively short scene in the unapologetically long novel, it represents the novel's central conflict: Paul's unwillingness to become socialized, to become a conventional member of English society at the turn of the twentieth-century. In other words, this exchange epitomizes Paul's reluctance to leave adolescence and enter adulthood. With the response "Anything," Paul demonstrates his indifference, rather than the enthusiasm that "Anything" might convey. In this single word, Lawrence encompasses the tension that will manifest itself throughout Paul's development.

Sons and Lovers marks a developmental milestone in Lawrence's canon; the novel is one of his earliest, and it at once embodies and exemplifies many of Lawrence's greatest strengths as a novelist but also his greatest weaknesses. While the novel is a work of fiction, Lawrence's life weighs heavily on the narrative, at times stifling the plot

and complicating Paul's character development independent of Lawrence himself; however, Lawrence's ability to adopt classic tropes of the Victorian *Bildungsroman* and modernize them for a world that was quickly changing at the beginning of the twentieth-century is truly an achievement.[1] Paul's development in this novel, marred as it may be by Lawrence's vanity and autobiographical inclinations, represents an imaginative effort to refashion the Victorian *Bildungsroman* in order to make it relevant in the twentieth-century.

The classical *Bildungsroman* assumes that its protagonist will undergo growth and, at the end of the novel, come of age; however, but that fundamental principle of the classical *Bildungsroman* does not appear to be as appropriate for individuals growing up after the sociopolitical and socioeconomic changes that the Industrial Revolution prompted. Additionally, scientific and technological advancements in the late nineteenth-century and early twentieth-century further disrupt this simple teleological character development typical of the classical *Bildungsroman*. The transition from the nineteenth-century to the twentieth-century represents, perhaps, the most drastic shift from one generation to another in human history, and the classical *Bildungsroman* proves to be ill-equipped for the transition.

Today, it is hard to comprehend the seismic shifts that took place at the turn of the century. Technological innovations such as the telephone, automobile and airplane, and

[1] In her essay "Notes on D. H. Lawrence," Virginia Woolf describes him as a writer who "echoes nobody, continues no tradition, is unaware of the past, of the present save as it affects the future" (355). Despite Woolf's insistence, I argue that Lawrence is keenly aware of the *Bildungsroman* tradition and is trying to imagine the future of the genre.
[2] On his journey to the Tower, Wilhelm comes across an old man along the road. The old man's speech posits that the individual's development is the sum of several parts: he

the standardization of time connected the world and created global networks that were unimaginable before, while at the same time, psychoanalytic discoveries that promised to shed light on the depths of the psyche left people feeling fragmented and alienated from the rest of the world. During this transition, art functioned as a coping mechanism for a quickly changing world, and despite the classical *Bildungsroman*'s teleological character development, the *Bildungsroman* was uniquely capable of reflecting the twentieth-century's scientific, technological, economic, and political shifts. The *Bildungsroman*'s sensitivity to the community's role in the individual's social normalization makes it exceptionally well suited to capture the anxiety, alienation, and fragmentation that are so emblematic of modernity, but at the beginning of the twentieth-century, before World War I, modernist writers were still grappling with the meaning of these dramatic societal changes.

Lawrence's *Sons and Lovers*, published a year before the assassination of Archduke Franz Ferdinand and his wife, the symbolic catalyst of World War I, anticipates many of the changes in narrative that we see in novels of the high modernists, a move that begins the transformation of the traditional English version of the genre, the Victorian *Bildungsroman*, into a stable and sustainable vessel for the crises of modernity. Through the novel, Lawrence anticipates the fracturing and fragmentation that is so emblematic of high modernism, and this fracturing and fragmentation becomes evident not just in the protagonist's thoughts and actions but also in the way that Lawrence develops the character, sometimes harmonizing with Victorian *Bildungsroman* characteristics but more often violently clashing with the tradition at other points. In this way, Lawrence's approach to the *Bildungsroman* does not render a genre that is brand

new, nor does it render a genre that is a shallow imitation of the tradition; instead, Lawrence approaches the traditional genre dialectically, casting away characteristics of the genre that lost their meaning and relevance in western world's breakneck pace of modernization. But it is important to note that Lawrence's novel represents a moment of transition. He has not yet discarded the Victorian tradition completely, nor has he the foresight to completely undertake the challenge of modernity in 1913. Rather, this novel should be considered a transitional text in the English *Bildungsroman* tradition.

Paul's reluctance to look for a job and enter the workforce, for example, is reminiscent of previous iterations of the *Bildungsroman*, but even after working at Thomas Jordan's factory in Nottingham for some time, Paul is still reluctant to embrace the job as a *profession*; as time goes on, Paul eventually starts to feel tension arise between his desire to be an artist and his modest factory job. This tension is the key to differentiating Lawrence's project from the *Bildungsromane* that came before it. However, Paul Morel is neither Stephen Dedalus nor Lily Briscoe, and *Sons and Lovers* is not a modern *Künstlerroman*. Paul strives to be an artist, but he does not fully undertake the task. Paul approaches art simply as a hobby, and though he begins to earn artistic credibility as well as monetary benefits from his art, he does not fully devote his life to his artistic project. Lawrence uses art as a vehicle for his criticism of industry and industrialized professions, so Paul's artistic project is never fully developed.

Paul is not a hugely successful artist, and his life does not follow the upward trajectory expected of a hero of a *Bildungsroman*, but in Paul, and in *Sons and Lovers* more generally, Lawrence prompts a substantial reevaluation of the *Bildungsroman* genre; he offers a glimpse at a literary tradition that is in the process of assessing its

values and making meaningful breaks from the past's traditions. It is my contention that the growing and unresolved tension between the individual and society reflects fundamental changes in the relationship between the individual and his/her community throughout the late nineteenth and early twentieth-century. And that is Lawrence's challenge to the Victorian *Bildungsroman*. Lawrence underscores the tension between Paul and his community to magnify a much larger societal problem that takes the stage in the twentieth-century: the role of the individual in society. Paul's failure as an artist is not Lawrence's failure as a novelist; instead, Paul's failure is an example of modernity's sense of individual alienation and the collapse of seemingly foundational ideologies.

The Process of Making It New

Sons and Lovers does not present a failed *Bildungsroman* simply because Paul is not a hugely successful artist at the end of the novel. Traditional *Bildungsromane* often leave the protagonist's future ambiguous. For example, as W. H. Bruford explains in "Goethe: *Wilhelm Meisters Lehrjahre* (1795-6)," in Goethe's novel, "[Goethe] left Wilhelm… not already at the desired goal, but with the prospect of proving himself, in the company of his son Felix, his wife Natalie and her friends and through the acceptance of a limited task in civil society, a reasonably cultivated person, some time in the future" (57). Despite acting as the standard bearer for the *Bildungsroman*, Goethe's *Wilhelm Meister's Apprenticeship* is not an idealized *Bildungsroman*. Wilhelm's cultivation is not complete, but accepting his place in the community denotes his relatively successful *bildung*. In *Sons and Lovers*, alternatively, follows Paul's progression through art, but the novel's conclusion is more enigmatic than ambiguous, and it works against the traditional *Bildungsroman*. At odds with the tradition, at the end of the novel, Paul does not become

part of a larger social system; Paul's future is uncertain, and despite Gertrude, Miriam, and Clara's best efforts, the novel concludes with Paul's failure to achieve artistic maturation. The typical hero's teleological progression through adolescence is upended with Paul's indistinct and inconclusive progression. *Sons and Lovers* does not adhere to the conventions of the traditional coming-of-age novel; instead of achieving a high-level of artistic maturation, the novel ends with Paul feeling lost. Without his mother to provide support and structure for his life, he becomes incapacitated and finds himself stagnated and unable to move forward.

Lawrence's changes to the *Bildungsroman* are relatively drastic, but obviously he was not the first writer to refine the genre to better reflect societal changes. As an inherently individualistic genre, the *Bildungsroman* lends itself to be easily refined to fit new challenges, especially challenges that involve the individual's assimilation into his/her community. Goethe's *Wilhelm Meister's Apprenticeship* and other early *Bildungsromane* feature protagonists who reconcile their freedom and individuality for the comfort and security of social integration. But in *Sons and Lovers*, and in modernity more generally, the very security that the community offers gets called into question. Modern novelists often do not assume that the society is virtuous and benign. Instead, they celebrate the individual's fragmented personality and criticize the community's fragmentation. While the individual's fragmentation is central to the modern *Bildungsroman*, the fragmentation of the community is not immediately obvious. The community often appears to be united, but this is an illusion. The community's façade hides the reality that it is made up of fragmented individuals, a point that Sigmund Freud explores in much of his later work. As a result, modern *Bildungsromane* often examine

the community's conflicting identity, but in Lawrence's novel, generally, he presents the community as a monolith, a powerful disciplinarian force that produces citizens who respect social norms and regulations.

In assuming the power and position of the community on the individual, Lawrence uses *Sons and Lovers* as a meditation on the individual's fragmentation; Lawrence's investigation takes form in Paul, his psychologically chaotic protagonist. Lawrence's personal interests in psychoanalysis takes center stage in *Sons and Lovers*: Paul becomes the physical embodiment of the fragmentation, and, though Lawrence is openly hostile about them, Freud's psychoanalytic theories offer a foundation for Lawrence's portrayal of Paul's divided consciousness. In Paul, Lawrence inscribes Freud's three distinct parts of the psyche, the ego, superego, and id, and he uses them to create tension between Paul's conflicting instinctual desires and his desire to live up to his family and friends' expectations of him. The effect of the revolutionary field of psychoanalysis weighs heavily on modernist artists, but especially writers of the *Bildungsroman* because it completely undermines the coherence and unity of the self that was taken for granted in previous generations. Additionally, psychoanalysis not only looks inward but also outward, and in others, we see the same disjointedness and fracture that we know to be our own. This kind of skepticism about ourselves as well as others leads to a renewed questioning of authority, especially the authority of the community, a collective group made up of individual fractured consciousnesses.

In *Sons and Lovers*, Lawrence formally introduces the fractured psyche into the traditional *Bildungsroman* framework, upsetting the protagonist's conventional teleological trajectory of development. As an early example of the modern

Bildungsroman, Lawrence's *Sons and Lovers* reflects major societal shifts that respond to the fundamental transition from the nineteenth to the twentieth-century. If one of the main tenets of modernism, as articulated by Ezra Pound, is to *make it new*, and if the main tenet of the *Bildungsroman* is to chart an individual's successful development from adolescence to adulthood, Lawrence may be a failure on both accounts. Lawrence's attempted reimagining of the *Bildungsroman* in the twentieth-century is an exercise in the *making* of something new. As neither a Victorian *Bildungsroman* nor a wholly modern *Bildungsroman*, Lawrence's *Sons and Lovers* exists in a liminal space between two generations. In a sense, Lawrence and Paul are quietly restrained by quickly evaporating Victorian ideals, while reaching toward a more liberated but not yet articulated future.

Utilizing what Moretti calls the classification principle, Lawrence takes great time and effort to craft a novel that follows its protagonist through the typical and traditional teleological progression from youth to adulthood; the reader follows Paul through countless steps that seem to move Paul upward, and the individual steps are relatively insignificant, compared to Paul's ultimate progression from youth to adulthood. However, with the novel's climatic conclusion, Lawrence completely upsets the reader's expectations for Paul. Paul's rejection of adulthood upsets the reader's expectations, but perhaps more importantly, Lawrence encourages a complete rereading of the novel. Instead of reading each incident as a step toward maturity, as is suggested in Goethe's *Wilhelm Meister's Apprenticeship*[2], if the reader considers that *Sons and Lovers* is truly

[2] On his journey to the Tower, Wilhelm comes across an old man along the road. The old man's speech posits that the individual's development is the sum of several parts: he explains that "'everything that happens to us leaves some traces, everything imperceptibly contributes to our development; but is dangerous to try to account for this

an example of the transformation principle, the individual stories from Paul's life become significant in and of themselves. Masquerading as a traditional *Bildungsroman*, *Sons and Lovers* is a landmark for the titanic shift from the traditional and the modernist *Bildungsroman* traditions.

In his refashioning of the novel for modernity, Lawrence joins a much larger novelistic tradition. Since the late eighteenth-century, writers have returned to the coming-of-age-story repeatedly, but with each new iteration, the novel changes slightly. While the basic plot structure has remained relatively consistent over the generations, minor idiosyncrasies have combined to amount to significant changes in the genre overall. But novelist's handling of the tension between the individual protagonist and his/her community, perhaps, offers us the most telling instance of a monumental shift in the genre, and the strength of *Sons and Lovers* results from Lawrence's early attempt to create a psychologically realistic protagonist who questions the community's casting of individuals.

The Developing Hero

Pinpointing a working definition of "*Bildungsroman*" has been one of the major concerns for scholars writing about the genre. Because the term is often used vaguely, it is useful to trace the term back to its origins. Germany philologist Johann Karl Simon Morgenstern first coined the term "*Bildungsroman*" in his lecture "On the Spirit and Cohesion of a Number of Philosophical Novels" (1810). Morgenstern went on to flesh out the *Bildungsroman* in subsequent lectures "On the Nature of the Bildungsroman"

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to ourselves. In the process we either become arrogant and lackadaisical or else downcast and faint-hearted, and both are destructive as regards the future'" (324).

(1819) and "On the History and the Bildungsroman" (1820). Morgenstern's early definition of the term gives us a platform for further investigation:

> We may call a novel a *Bildungsroman* first and foremost on account of its content, because it represents the development of the hero in its beginning and progress to a certain stage of completion, but also, second, because this depiction promotes the development of the reader to a greater extent than any other kind of novel. (654-5)

Morgenstern goes on to argue that the *Bildungsroman* novelist must "aim to unite the purpose of art, which is to please and to entertain by means of the beautiful, with the strictly human purpose to serve, to instruct, and to better—in a word, to form [bilden]" (655). Morgenstern places a substantial burden on the *Bildungsroman* writer; not only does he/she has to account for the development of the protagonist, but he/she must also contribute to the sociological development of the reader. Morgenstern's criteria suggest that the writer must have a finger on the pulse of his/her society, a specialized knowledge of the concerns of the society in his/her time.

Morgenstern admits as much in his discussion of *Wilhelm Meister's Apprenticeship*, Morgenstern's point of reference for the *Bildungsroman*. Goethe's novel follows eighteen-year-old Wilhelm, the son of a wealthy merchant, as he begins to feel increasingly stifled by his community and sets off with a theatre company. Over the course of several books, Goethe develops Wilhelm's character, using episodes from his life to illustrate the transition from adolescence to adulthood, ultimately culminating in Wilhelm's marriage to the daughter of a noble family. In essence, Morgenstern argues, the task of *Wilhelm Meister's Apprenticeship* is "nothing else than to depict a human

being who develops toward his true nature by means of a collaboration of his inner dispositions with outer circumstances. The goal of this development is a perfect equilibrium, combining harmony with freedom." Morgenstern explains, "I just now called *Wilhelm Meister's Apprenticeship* a model of its kind, from our time and for our time. But Chronos marches quickly, leaving ruins behind him and gazing toward ever-new edifices that rise up before him" (658).

According to Morgenstern's definition, the *Bildungsroman* writer must be in-tune with his/her cultural context in order to speak to the new challenges facing the audience. Therefore, it is no surprise that writers have revised these requirements over the centuries to accommodate sociological changes, but the foundation of Morgenstern's definition remains an integral part of most contemporary definitions of the genre: the *Bildungsroman* must tell the protagonist's story of development in addition to facilitating growth in the audience.

Since Morgenstern's lectures, Chronos has indeed marched on. In the centuries following Goethe's *Wilhelm Meister's Apprenticeship*, the novel of development has changed dramatically. Because a youth's development is different across time and place, a *Bildungsroman* in the German tradition will tell a different story than a *Bildungsroman* in the English tradition. Critics have attempted to account for sociological changes in the novel, but it leads to complications identifying the genre's permanent characteristics. Morgenstern's own explanation of the novel's situatedness in its own time and place make it even more difficult to formulate a set of universal features of the genre. Ultimately, the *Bildungsroman* is notoriously difficult to discuss in the abstract, but some critics have noted that *Bildungsromane* often share commonalities. To combat the

ambiguity in the term "*Bildungsroman*," some critics have chosen to specify their own requirements for the *Bildungsroman*. However, creating an idiosyncratic set of criterion to describe the *Bildungsroman* only leads to more ambiguity in the larger conversation about the genre. There are, however, at least a few characteristics of the genre that we can ascribe to a certain novelistic tradition. For example, the traditional *Bildungsroman* requires the protagonist's teleological growth. Because it assumes a kind of ideal at the end of growth, the *Bildungsroman*'s protagonist must continue to move forward. Early twentieth-century *Bildungsroman* novels disrupt this teleological model of character development, complicating and adding psychological depth to adolescent characters who, in comparison with the protagonists in Victorian *Bildungsromane*, contradict their own desires through an internalization of societal norms. Lawrence emphasizes his interest in this kind of character development in his essay "Why the Novel Matters." Lawrence writes, "[i]n the novel, the characters can do nothing but *live*. If they keep on being good, according to pattern, or bad, according to pattern, or even volatile, according to pattern, they cease to live, and the novel falls dead. A character in a novel has got to live, or it is nothing" (197). If a character follows the traditional teleological progression, according to pattern, he/she really ceases to live. Lawrence ascribes a certain kind of agency to characters in novels. This agency is key to the modern *Bildungsroman*. If a character does not have to follow a predictable pattern of behavior toward adulthood, the transitional period between adolescence and adulthood must be reconsidered, if not done away with altogether.

Just before a character embarks on new experiences that are characteristic of the genre, he/she often feels anxious and uncertain, a hallmark of the genre, even despite

major differences in time and place. For example, in Charles Dickens's classic novel of realism *David Copperfield* (1850), David's lackluster grades set the stage for his expulsion from his house and entrance into Salem House. In the Mark Twain's American regionalist novel *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn* (1884), Huck's adventure begins because he is averse to the Widow's spiritual education. And in Lawrence's *Sons and Lovers*, Paul is reluctant to enter a profession, despite his mother's affectionate request. Reluctance to pass these different thresholds is common in the *Bildungsroman* genre, but most of the protagonists who actively avoid the transition from adolescence to adulthood eventually come to terms with this natural progression. However, in the twentieth-century, novelists begin experimenting with *Bildungsroman* protagonists who do not accept this change. Modern protagonists often reject the markers of experiences and remain suspended in a transitional space where they experience the hallmark episodes that are characteristic of the maturation process, but they reject the responsibility of adulthood.

Paul's character experiences several rites of passage in order to initiate and complete the transitional phase of his early adulthood. Arnold van Gennep's comparative study *The Rites of Passage* (1909) introduced the idea of celebratory rites of passage to mark an individual's transition through three separate stages: separation, transition, and incorporation. Van Gennep's argument suggested that despite the apparent individuality of an individual's rites of passage, the community is very much a part of every transition:

> Transitions from group to group and from one social situation to the next are looked on as implicit in the very fact of existence, so that a man's life comes to be made up of a succession of stages with similar ends and

> beginnings: birth, social puberty, marriage, fatherhood, advancement to a higher class, occupational specialization, and death. (3)

According to van Gennep's theory, these rites are designed to act as bracing mechanisms for the individual as well as the group. In *Bildungsromane*, the protagonist progresses through these same types of stages in order to be promoted to the next stage of development. Van Gennep's understanding of the interconnectedness of the individual and the group, as well as van Gennep's specialized vocabulary, can offer tremendous insight into how characters develop in the *Bildungsroman*. Van Gennep's study underscores the centrality of the group to the individual's development, a characteristic of even the earliest *Bildungsroman*.

Like other novelistic genres, the *Bildungsroman* is not immune to historical shifts. Throughout its history, the *Bildungsroman* has responded to changes in geography, economics, and sociopolitical realities, but in the early twentieth-century, the *Bildungsroman* changes more drastically than it had in previous generations. In her 1923 essay "Mr. Bennett and Mrs. Brown," Virginia Woolf famously claimed that in December 1910, human nature changed drastically:

> I am not saying that one went out, as one might into a garden, and there saw that a rose had flowered, or that a hen had laid an egg. The change was not sudden and definite like that. But a change there was, nevertheless; and, since one must be arbitrary, let us date it about the year 1910. (194)

Woolf's date marks Roger Fry's *Manet and the Post-Impressionists* exhibition at the Grafton Galleries in London, but this moment is also a key date for determining a turning

point in history. Despite the admittedly arbitrary date, Woolf's date functions well as a definitive point of departure, roughly coinciding with major politically, philosophical, and technological challenges that would categorically mark the twentieth-century as a much different century than the ones that came before it.

Queen Victoria began her long reign in 1837 and ruled until 1901. During her reign Great Britain's empire reached its pinnacle and grew substantially, pushing into India and Africa. But by the time of Queen Victoria's death, the Empire was already beginning its decline. King Edward VII took control in 1901, and despite the slow degradation of the Empire, the Edwardian era was a time of relative peace for England. After a series of illnesses, Edward VII died in May 1910 (just months before Woolf's December 1910 date), ending his relatively short reign as King. George V, Edward VII's son, took the throne after his father's death, but the relative peace and calm that characterized his father's reign would not last. Just a few years after George V took the throne, England would join the most deadly war the world had ever known. On August 4, 1914, England declared war on Austria-Hungary, plunging the Empire into World War I.

The relatively quick transition from relative calm to the turbulence of World War I caused the English to reevaluate the Edwardian era; as a result, the literature after World War I often romanticizes it. Nostalgia for prewar Britain caused many British writers to envision Edward VII's reign as a golden age for Britain. Regardless of its authenticity, the feelings of longing and sentimental attitudes are clearly identifiable in English modernism.

The break between the Victorian era and modernity is particularly jarring because the technological innovations and social changes that combined with the tragedy of the

First World War, and Woolf's 1910 date gives us a useful approximation of the massive societal shifts. Additionally, relatively new scientific discoveries collided with the technological developments of the late nineteenth and early twentieth-century that seemed to underscore the centrality of the community in the individual's life.

In addition to the technological innovations that allowed the world to become interconnected, in 1905 Albert Einstein introduced his Special Theory of Relativity, followed by his General Theory of Relativity in 1915. For many artists of the time, Einstein's theories of relativity seemed to give credence to relativism, a doctrine that holds that every human experience must be relative to something else. It appeared that Einstein had provided scientific evidence for this philosophical doctrine that flies in the face of the empiricism characteristic of Enlightenment thought. Julie M. Johnson argues that because Einstein was part of a scientific narrative that includes Darwin, Bergson, and Freud, his theory caught the popular imagination, and it helped to legitimize many modern artists' relativism:

> Whereas the theory affirms that relativity need not hold dominion over perception, a postulate to the theory appears to make relativity king, for it claims that, because each observer's perception cannot arbitrarily be designated as 'true.' Because the postulate confirmed the increasing relativism in philosophy, psychology, and the arts, it caught the popular imagination and was taken for the theory itself. (219)

Johnson cites articles from London's *The Times*, *New York Times*, *Scientific American, Forum, The Literary Digest*, and *Popular Mechanics* that attempt to explain the theory of relativity to average people. Johnson argues that given the reverberations of the theory

throughout popular culture, "[i]t would have been impossible for any intellectually oriented person not to think that he had some understanding of the theory, even if it were a wrong one, which it often was" (220). Even an incorrect understanding of the theory was enough to situate Einstein's theory of relativity in the popular culture, even if it was still being debated in physics

The modernist writer's incorporation of Einstein's scientific breakthrough, even indirectly, altered literary treatment of the individual's relation to a community. In the modernist *Bildungsroman*, the writer rails against the individual's virtual obligatory socialization and chooses to create drama through the tension that arises between an individual unwilling to conform to traditional roles in society and a community that must correct rebellious individuals in order to protect itself and ensure its continuation. Freud's theories of the self caused the same kind of questioning as Einstein's revolutionary gravitational theories. The burgeoning field of psychoanalysis caused suspicion of even such an ostensibly tangible idea as personal identity.

Contrary to the conventional notion of the harmonious and unified individual psyche, Freud's theories suggest that the self is fractured. Freud divides the individual's psyche into three distinct parts: the id, ego, and superego. The id is driven by the pleasure principle; it presses the individual to act on instinctive and primitive behavior. The ego is responsible for interacting with reality; the ego is a part of the id that has been influenced by reality. The superego is a part of the ego; in this section of the ego, the individual embodies the higher nature of his parents. Freud explains that the superego is the individual's religious, moral, and social senses ("The Ego and the Id" 643). The ego is responsible for reining in the id and trying to live up to the superego's rules and

standards. Because the teleological projection of the individual's development is key to the *Bildungsroman*, it is natural to wonder if these new psychoanalytic theories are incompatible with the genre. If the self is splintered into these three disparate parts, it becomes difficult to determine if a true teleological progression can exist.

Freud's late essay "Civilization and Its Discontents" (1930) builds on his ideas from "Beyond the Pleasure Principle" (1920) and "The Ego and the Id" (1923). In this essay, Freud argues, "[n]ormally, there is nothing of which we are more certain than the feeling of our self, of our own ego. This ego appears to us as something autonomous and unitary, marked off distinctly from everything else" (724). But, Freud's concepts of the id, ego, and superego clearly break this autonomous and unitary ego into three separate and distinctive parts. Our sense of self is fundamental to the human experience, but Freud deconstructs this notion and replaces it with a self that is fundamentally shattered, and these parts clash constantly.

Through these clashes, Freud argues, human beings constantly try to balance their innate desires with society's norms. In "Civilization and Its Discontents," rather than retracing the same intellectual ground he examined in "The Ego and the Id," discussing how the id, ego, and superego function in a single human being, Freud examines how these three aspects of an individual's personality interact with other individuals. Freud goes on to draw an analogy between the development of the individual and the development of the civilization. Though newer psychological theories have displaced Freud, the lasting effects and influences of Freud's theories are evident in the arts. Because the *Bildungsroman* places such an emphasis on the unity of the individual, it is obvious that writers would have to tangle with Freud's revolutionary theory about the

splintered individual as well as the monumental effect of the society on the individual's choices. Through the superego, society and its rules and regulations enter and impede on the individual's free will. In Chapter II, I will discuss the subtleties of Freud's conceptions of the fractured identity as well as how individuals collectively build societies; in Chapter III, I will discuss how Freud's theories had an impact on Lawrence's construction of Paul Morel and a new, modern type of *Bildungsroman*; and in Chapter IV, I will discuss the shortcomings of Lawrence's novel as well as how later modernists build on the foundation that Lawrence helped construct for the modern *Bildungsroman*.

Modernist writers used the *Bildungsroman* as a vehicle for explorations of the fractured self, and I argue that considering Freud's psychoanalysis in criticism on the *Bildungsroman* will help to explain the complexities of the protagonist as well as his/her interaction with civilization. Throughout the history of the *Bildungsroman*, the tension between the individual and civilization has been a foundational conflict, a hallmark of the genre; the individual must struggle to come to terms with his/her role in the world in which he/she lives. But Freud's argument grounds that tension psychologically and offers an explanation for its origin. However, writers have handled this tension differently. One of the purposes of this study is to chart how modernist writers handled the tension between the individual and civilization differently than previous writers of *Bildungsroman*. But Freud's theories of the fractured self recapitulate that struggle. According to Freud, civilization is the process of unifying mankind, and civilization places limits on the individual's aggression, thus exerting control over it. In "Civilization and Its Discontents," Freud comes to the conclusion that the development of the

individual is the constant struggle, the balancing act, between individual happiness and communal harmony.

Using Freud's theories to analyze Lawrence's body of work is not groundbreaking, and that is particularly true for *Sons and Lovers*. Paul's familial relationships are easily linked to Freud's Oedipus complex, and from the novel's publication, critics have concerned themselves with Paul's romantic relationship with his mother as well as his hatred for his father. Alfred Booth Kuttner's 1916 article "*Sons and Lovers*: A Freudian Appreciation" posits that Paul is simply a substitute for Lawrence, contending that Paul and Lawrence are "one and the same" (286). Fifty years later, psychoanalytic criticism of the novel reached its highpoint: Daniel Weiss's *Oedipus in Nottingham: D. H. Lawrence* (1962) is widely regarded as the pinnacle of the argument surrounding Freud's Oedipus complex and *Sons and Lovers*, and it offers further evidence for Kuttner's assertion that Paul *is* Lawrence. Weiss argues that though Lawrence intentionally wrote the Oedipus complex into the final draft of *Sons and Lovers*, Lawrence inadvertently writes the complex into Paul's relationship with the suffragette Clara. According to Weiss, Clara becomes a substitute for Gertrude and Clara's husband Baxter becomes a substitute for Walter. When Paul and Baxter fight near the novel's conclusion, Weiss argues, Paul really fights with his father, Walter, for the love of his mother, Gertrude.

However, this thesis will break away from the familiar pattern of using Freud's Oedipus complex to draw similarities between Lawrence and Paul, and whether Kuttner, Weiss, and others were correct in their assertion that Lawrence *is* Paul is not within the scope of this project. I suggest that Freud's psychoanalytic theories through influence this

novel and inform Lawrence's arguably more *realistic* development of Paul than previous Victorian *Bildungsroman* that attempt to use realism to chart an individual's development. I aim to introduce successfully Lawrence's interest in psychological realism to his attempt at creating a modern *Bildungsroman*. In doing so, I hope to break away from the tired psychoanalytic interpretations of Lawrence's early novel.

II. Wilhelm's Socialization

> Civilization, therefore, obtains mastery over the individual's dangerous desire for aggression by weakening and disarming it and by setting up an agency within him to watch over it, like a garrison in a conquered city.
> - Sigmund Freud, "Civilization and Its Discontents"

The term "*Bildungsroman*" requires special attention from non-German critics. The term, after all, not only dates back to the nineteenth-century, but it also references a very specific type of German novel that, for a number of reasons, is not readily comparable to Anglophone novels. To further complicate the usage of the term, non-Germans' appropriation of the word has loaded it with very specific connotations. The anecdote that Jeffrey L. Sammons begins his aptly titled "The Bildungsroman for Nonspecialists: An Attempt at a Clarification" encapsulates the peculiarity of using this particular term. Sammons explains that on a one day on his children's vocabulary-expanding calendar, the word for the day was "*Bildungsroman*." The calendar offered Lawrence's *Sons and Lovers* as its illustrative example; noting the oddity of this, Sammons explains that a curious person would question how an English novel could become the illustrative example "for such an obviously German term" (20). However, despite any difficulty that may arise from using this term in Anglophone criticism, I argue that it is significant for situating a novel to the tradition.

My intention for this study is not an in-depth discussion of the *Bildungsroman* from its Germanic origins through English modernism, but a thorough investigation of

the English *Bildungsroman* requires a basic familiarity with the traditional characteristics of the classical German *Bildungsroman;* only then can we successfully analyze changes in the English *Bildungsroman* tradition. The characteristics of the classical *Bildungsroman* are pivotal to the development of the specifically English *Bildungsroman* tradition. However, as Sammons's anecdote subtly suggests, the difficulty of translating "*Bildungsroman*" into an accurate and appropriate English word or phrase is a demanding hurdle.

Imperfect Translations

The lack of a definitive definition of the *Bildungsroman* makes it extremely difficult for Anglophone speakers to discuss and even more difficult to critique. The lack of a truly accurate and comprehensive English translation of the term creates a lot of ambiguity. But the problem does not end with Anglophone criticism; even among German scholars, the helpfulness of even categorizing a novel as a *Bildungsroman* is not clear. James Hardin explains that in recent years, German scholars have not only debated what constitutes a *Bildungsroman* but also if the genre "is a useful, descriptive technical term at all and, if not, whether it might be better to invent another" (x). As a result, a centuries-old, subtly constructed German genre becomes reduced to simply a sum of its parts.

In German, "*bildung*" roughly translates to "form." Therefore, "*Bildungsroman*" literally translates as the novel of formation. However, when the term is translated into English, the traditionally German genre loses its nuanced meaning; the connotations that accompany "form" make this translation problematic. This translation of "*Bildungsroman*" assumes that the novel features some sort of positive transformation of

its hero, but over the centuries, as more writers try their hand at this type of novel and the historical context of the novel changes, and the genre becomes more nuanced. Most notably, the protagonist's education or learning, as it relates to their formation or growth, becomes less central to the novel's plot. Further, especially in modernity, the protagonist's successful completion of his/her education or learning becomes less assured. Additionally, in German literature, there is another distinct novelistic genre that is concerned with the protagonist's education: the *Erziehungsroman*.

In an attempt to sidestep the complications of translation, Jerome Buckley's inductive study of the English *Bildungsroman Season of Youth: The Bildungsroman from Dickens to Golding*, Jerome Buckley draws a pattern from a number of novels traditionally categorized as *Bildungsromane*. Buckley identifies the common protagonist as a child from a provincial town who is constrained intellectually and must leave his home to escape those constraints. He can return home only after his initiation is complete. There are several steps along the way to societal initiation, including the protagonist's spiritual and intellectual education, sexual experience, and professional development. For Buckley, these particular characteristics have transcended relatively significant changes in society and the novel since the eighteenth-century and remain at the heart of the *Bildungsroman*. However, in spite of Buckley's effort, no single text embodies all the conventions of the genre; it is often pointed out that even *Wilhelm Meister's Apprenticeship* does not adhere to the strictest of *Bildungsroman* criteria.

Increased interest in the *Bildungsroman* under the lens of feminism and post-colonialism necessitates a broader definition of the *Bildungsroman*. In his essay "Modernist Studies and the *Bildungsroman*," Tobias Boes explains that rather than trying

to shoehorn all novels featuring a growing youthful protagonist into the extremely restrictive confines of the classical German *Bildungsroman*, a more general definition of the *Bildungsroman* gives scholars new opportunities to explore the maturation of protagonists who do not follow the traditional trajectory. Boes explains that he, along with several other critics including Jed Esty, adopt the more neutral term "development" in order to highlight "the intimate connection between personal and historical change" (241-2). In this thesis, I adopt Boes's definition of "*Bildungsroman*" as the novel of development. While still potentially problematic, "development," rather than "education" or "learning," connotes a more neutral understanding of a protagonist's change over time, a point that is especially important for the modern *Bildungsroman*, the main subject of this study, where the protagonist often does not complete the growth that is required of his/her classical counterpart; in fact, many modernist writers actively write against the kind of teleological projection that was prominently featured in previous generations of the *Bildungsroman*.

Further, despite the ongoing debate surrounding the term's definition as well as the debate about the term's usefulness in today's critical climate, I argue that the *Bildungsroman* serves a unique critical purpose, and it gives us a virtually unparalleled way of discussing the development of a protagonist as it relates to the development of social constructs. If we trace the *Bildungsroman* through the centuries, we can see the novel interacting with sociopolitical and socioeconomic realities as well as scientific and technological advances. In the *Bildungsroman*, we see the protagonist desperately trying to understand the world around him/her and become assimilated; his/her assimilation is directly connected to the society's values at a particular time.

In this thesis, it may appear as though I am framing the modern *Bildungsroman* as a direct reaction to the classical or *Bildungsroman*, but in fact, the *Bildungsroman* is simply adjusting to the twentieth-century's values, and in the twentieth-century, there was a monumental shift in the way people thought about their place in society, as a result of globalization, technological achievements, as well as a genuine distrust of authority. In addition to capitalism's mounting challenge to the framework that had worked well for the *Bildungsroman* as well as the modernist's reprisal of the classical *Bildungsroman* as a kind of rebellion, I argue that one very specific scientific advancement in the twentieth-century also pushed the modern *Bildungsroman* toward a more radical path of development: Freud's psychoanalytic theories concerning the formation of the self.

To return to the question of the *Bildungsroman*'s place in contemporary criticism, it seems to me that the *Bildungsroman* is one of the best tools we have to determine how writers perceived the world around them, and in modernity, we get an incredible access to the writer's vision of the role of the individual in the society that is desperately trying to maintain the ideology of the nation-state while the imagined communities around them crumble. As the world moves away from concepts of nation-state and the politics of industrialization, the *Bildungsroman* may not always be a useful tool for discussing the individual's place in the world, but for the foreseeable future, this type of novel is a powerful critique of the development of the individual through adolescence to adulthood as well as the nation-state.

"Vanishing Miracles" and the Development of the Novel of Development

For Karl Morgenstern, the eighteenth-century German philologist who coined the term "*Bildungsroman*," the novel is the natural byproduct of a modernizing nation. As the

nation begins to develop, there is a shift in its values. Morgenstern argues that this shift marks the transition from the epic poem to the novel. Progress drives the nation forward:

> The nation reaches a state of greater external peace, property is secured, the professions and occupations of men become more differentiated and more interdependent at the same time, and reason gradually asserts its rights over what had previously been the domain of imagination. Miracles vanish, oracles fall silent, the gods retreat to Mount Olympus; reality reigns, and the law of objective reason loudly declares its unlimited claims. (653)

Morgenstern's understanding of national progression suggests an explanation for the rise of the novel and realism. In this new kind of literary form, Morgenstern suggests, we see the harsh realities of the modernizing world and how individuals learn to develop alongside the nation. It is simple to see how Morgenstern understands the role of the novel as a tool for aiding in the development of individual members of the nation. Without the miracles, oracles, and gods that populate epics, the novelist must rely on episodes from everyday life in order to move the plot forward and develop the protagonist.

If the break from the world of the epic to the world of the novel is as decisive as Morgenstern describes it, it is easy to see how a similar break could occur again in modernity, an argument that Esty makes in his investigation of the role of colonialism in the development of the *Bildungsroman*. Esty argues that if the classical *Bildungsroman* mirrors the developing nation-state, the national-era, the modern *Bildungsroman* must then mirror the modern world's globalization, the global-era. In modernity, an era of unparalleled global commerce, capitalism's relentless consumption makes it impossible

for the *Bildungsroman* to function in the same capacity that it had in the nation-era.

Additionally, the classical *Bildungsroman* in the eighteenth-century understood the protagonist as simply a passive receptacle for God's active transformation, though later eighteenth-century writers and critics believed that "individuals… gradually develop their own innate potential through interaction with their environment" (Summerfield and Downward 2). The modern *Bildungsroman* rejects God's active transformation of the passive protagonist, but does not fully endorse the view that the protagonist can develop an innate potential or skill through an interaction with the environment. Instead, the protagonist is more of a blank canvas that must contend with very particular social and economic realities in order to attempt to achieve maturation.

The modern *Bildungsroman*'s transition from God's active molding of the protagonist to the protagonist's more active transformation reflects a growing sense of God's absence in the modern world, and in the place of the absent God who molds the individual, the modern *Bildungsroman* recognizes society as the leading force in the protagonist's development. Since the earliest examples of the *Bildungsroman*, the community has been a driving force in the protagonist's development, but in the twentieth-century, the modern *Bildungsroman* takes a more skeptical approach to the community's involvement in the development of the hero.

Society, Surveillance, and Normalization

Normalization is a central theme of the *Bildungsroman*, and from the very earliest examples of this type of novel, surveillance, of some kind, has been used as a tool to curb unscrupulous behaviors. Michael Foucault's application of Jeremy Bentham's Panopticon prison design is illustrative of the role of surveillance in the development of the

individual. Bentham originally designed the Panopticon as a prison, but Foucault adopted the design to work as his leading metaphor for the modern world's coerced socialization. Foucault argues that the Panopticon is a reverse of the dungeon: placing a large tower in the middle of the prison and using backlighting to their advantage, prison guards would be able to create the illusion of constant supervision, exerting the full effect of the prison guard's power, even when the tower is empty. Therefore, the inmates internalize the power of the prison and actually exercise it on themselves:

> He who is subjected to a field of visibility, and who knows it, assumes responsibility for the constraints of power; he makes them play spontaneously upon himself; he inscribes in himself the power relation in which he simultaneously plays both roles; he becomes the principle of his own subjection. (202-3)

For Foucault, the true power of the prison is psychological rather than physical. The prisoners internalize the norms of the prison, and they no longer need the prison guard to supervise them at all. Foucault's Panopticon metaphor is key for the *Bildungsroman* because of the genre's interest in the individual's development in the community. The protagonist's acceptance and internalization of the society's values is central for an individual's satisfactory development from adolescence into adulthood. In *Wilhelm Meister's Apprenticeship*, Goethe places an extraordinary amount of emphasis on Wilhelm's acceptance of his society's rules and regulations, even using a familiar apparatus as a symbol of society's coerced socialization.

The seventh book of *Wilhelm Meister's Apprenticeship* concludes with Wilhelm reaching the Society of the Tower's mysterious Masonic lodge, a storage place for the

Society's archives; Boes is right to point out the similarities between the Society's Masonic Tower and the Panopticon. In Goethe's novel, the Tower Society actively works to mold and shape its unaware apprentices, and near the conclusion of the novel, Wilhelm reaches the tower and realizes that his life has been a culmination of seemingly unrelated and insignificant moments, a realization that Goethe foreshadows repeatedly. Earlier in the seventh book, just before he reaches the tower, Wilhelm meets an old man on the street who seems to point to this very revelation. Reflecting on his time with friends, Wilhelm feels that that time was wasted, that it is simply a void now. The old man replies: "'You are mistaken; everything that happens to use leaves some traces, everything imperceptibly contributes to our development; but it is dangerous to try to account for this to ourselves'" (324). Though Wilhelm misses the old man's hints, the reader picks up on them, continuing the reader's own development, one of Morgenstern's requirements for the *Bildungsroman*. In disagreeing with Wilhelm about wasting his time, the old man prepares Wilhelm and the reader for the Society's eerie recording system, the Tower archive; as Wilhelm comes to realize, the Society has guided his development and recorded the seemingly insignificant moments of his life that can be examined in retrospect and placed on a teleological projection from adolescence to adulthood.

As the exemplar of the *Bildungsroman* genre, *Wilhelm Meister's Apprenticeship* normalizes the Society's constant observation of Wilhelm, and though other *Bildungsromane* do not adopt the Society's recording apparatus to facilitate the protagonist's development from adolescence to adulthood, the significance of surveillance remains. In the *Bildungsroman*, the individual is subject to constant

observation, causing a kind of normalization that slowly molds the individual in the image of the society. The modern *Bildungsroman* acts as a kind of rebellion to the society's coerced socialization.

In keeping with the centrality of social normalization, Gregory Castle rightfully places education at the center of the classical *Bildungsroman*. He argues that through the nineteenth-century's emphasis on the education of individuals, the concept of *bildung* becomes "increasingly tied to pragmatic discourses of social recruitment and social mobility" (30). In the modern *Bildungsroman*, Castle sees a resistance to this type of instituted socialization, noting that many modernists found ways to show how "presumed failure of the subject to satisfy the demands of society (especially in contexts of education and work) could be revalued and transformed into new forms of identity" (30). Ultimately, Castle argues, bureaucratization, rationalization, and instrumentalization "transformed the desire to cultivate oneself, to nurture one's inner culture, into the desire for social success and for a social pedagogy that teaches young men and women the [sic] 'the way of the world'" (53). For Castle, the modern *Bildungsroman* is a reprisal of the classical *Bildungsroman*, a way of recuperating aesthetico-spiritual *bildung*.

The Education of David Copperfield and the Values of the Victorian *Bildungsroman*

Generally, the Victorian *Bildungsroman* retains many of the most notable characteristics of the classical *Bildungsroman*, including the significance of the individual's assimilation into the community. In the English tradition, the Victorian *Bildungsroman* accentuates the novel's protagonist finding a way to compromise his/her own ambitions with society's expectations. One of the most notable examples of this kind of *Bildungsroman*, and the standard-bearer for the Victorian *Bildungsroman* generally, is

Charles Dickens's *David Copperfield*.

Violence, of one type of another, characterizes David Copperfield's development; society uses violence to mold and shape individuals into accepting socially responsible behavior, thereby perpetuating not only the society but also violence. At the beginning of the novel, David is an adult, and the novel is his own reflection of his adolescence. David traces his life through his early childhood to the time of his narration. Throughout the novel, David is constantly punished for his behavior, and his punishments help to regulate and normalize his behavior. One of David's first punishments is perhaps the most significant. David's mother tutors him at home, and after a number of disappointing lessons, David's stepfather Mr. Murdstone becomes frustrated, and after one particular lesson, Murdstone feels that David's performance merits a beating. David bites Murdstone and is sent to be educated at Salem House as a punishment. Once there, David and the other boys are subjected to physical as well as mental punishments for their misbehavior.

At Salem House, David is forced to wear a sign that identifies him as a biter. The headmaster, Mr. Creakle, even threatens to file David's teeth. Creakle pinches David's ear and warns him that he will be punished if he misbehaves, alluding to an agreement between Creakle and David's stepfather: "'When I say I'll do a thing, I do it,' said Mr. Creakle; 'and when I say I will have a thing done, I will have it done'" (71). In the next chapter, Creakle threatens the boys: "'Come fresh up to the lessons, I advise you, for I come fresh up to the punishment'" (76). In this threat, Creakle equates the schoolboys' lessons with his punishment, at once elevating the importance of punishment with the importance of education as well as violently threatening the students to understand and

accept the education that is placed on them. After this threat, Creakle savagely beats one of David's classmates, Traddles. After being beaten, Traddles draws skeletons; David wonders if it is Traddles's way of reminding "himself by those symbols of morality that caning couldn't last forever" (78). Though the older David now sees that Traddles was probably simply drawing the skeletons because they were easy to draw, the younger David sees death as the only escape to Creakle and his violent canings.

But the threats of violence do not end with Creakle; throughout the novel, physical and mental punishment are used to normalize behavior, to force the characters to become functional parts of the very society that demoralizes them. However, the violence is often disguised or concealed. Dickens places significant emphasis on authority figures' use of their power to punish the people who are inferior to them. Very often, as the scenes at Salem House show, David is the individual who is punished, but his mother also faces severe punishment at the hands of his stepfather. Before David is sent to Salem House, his mother Clara educates him at home, but he is a poor student. Murdstone intervenes Clara's disciplining of David: "'What's this? Clara, my love, have you forgotten?—Firmness, my dear'" (39). In this instance, it is clear that Murdstone actually directs Clara's molding of David. While it is obvious that David is being trained and educated to become part of society, Murdstone's training of Clara is disguised.

Despite his compassionate veneer, Murdstone's chastising tone toward his wife is at once parental as well as patriarchal, and David recognizes it when Murdstone grabs Clara, drawing her close: "He drew her to him, whispered in her ear, and kissed her. I knew as well, when I saw my mother's head lean down upon his shoulder, and her arm touch his neck—I knew as well that he could mould her pliant mature into any form he

chose, as I know, now, that he did it" (39). In his mother's leaning head, David sees compliance and submission to Murdstone, an acknowledgement of Murdstone's unflappable authority. During a visit home from Salem House, David observes an argument between Clara and Peggotty. Clara explains that Murdstone has both David and her best interests at heart:

> "He naturally loves a certain person, on my account; and acts solely for a certain person's good. He is better able to judge of it than I am; for I very well know that I am a weak, light, girlish creature, and that he is a firm, grave, serious man. And he takes," said my mother, with the tears which were engendered in her affectionate nature, stealing down her face, "he takes great pains with me; and I ought to be very thankful to him, and very submissive to him even in my thoughts; and when I am not, Peggotty, I worry and condemn myself, and feel doubtful of my own heart, and don't know what to do." (98)

Murdstone's forming of his wife is subtle but extremely powerful. Even when he is not present, Clara feels a responsibility to him; she even says that in her thoughts she feels that she must be submissive, reminiscent of Foucault's Panopticon. But what makes Clara's speech so important is her understanding of the situation. She knows that Murdstone has tried to form her into the wife he wants, and she knows that he is severe. At once, she is aware of Murdstone's manipulation and unable to do anything to stop it. Murdstone has forced his wishes onto her so dramatically that his rules and regulations have become her moral compass, her sense of right and wrong. In Clara, Dickens presents a character who is thoroughly integrated into the social structure but just for a moment shows the reader a glimpse of self-reflection.

Dickens does not arrange for either Murdstone or Creakle to be construed as sympathetic characters, and the elder David denounces Murdstone and Creakle's cruelty; however, as David matures, he begins to show signs of Murdstone's quiet manipulation and Creakle's violent outbursts, suggesting David's at least partial integration into the society's power structure. One of the most telling examples of David's social integration is his relationship with his first wife, Dora. Just as Murdstone tries to mold David's mother Clara into a strict disciplinarian and his ideal wife, David tries to mold Dora. After her housekeeping does not improve, David resolves to "form Dora's mind." Like Murdstone in the generation before him, David uses his authoritative position in their relationship as well as society to control his wife:

> When Dora was very childish, and I would have infinitely preferred to humour her, I tried to be grave—and disconcerted her, and myself too. I talked to her on the subjects which occupied my thoughts; and I read Shakespeare to her—and fatigued her to the last degree. (592)

David's attempt to form his wife's mind shows that despite his disgust with Murdstone's treatment of his mother, he is thoroughly invested in the values of the community. Though David's story continues and eventually Dora dies and he remarries, when David begins trying to form Dora's mind, his socialization is complete.

The Individual in Einstein's "Relative" Universe

As discussed in the introduction, Einstein's gravitational theories had a significant impact on the conception of the self and his/her perception of the world.[3] Most people of the period did not have the scientific expertise to understand Einstein's theories, and even many scientists who could understand them initially rejected them. Misunderstanding and antagonism toward the theory often led to Einstein's theories being inaccurately reduced to relativism. Even the threat of a scientific explanation of relativism is enough to threaten the *Bildungsroman* and the proven method of socialization through education. Relativism suggests that the individual's perception of a number of social tenets, including morality, is just as defensible as the perceptions of the community at large. Suddenly, as a result of the misunderstanding of Einstein's theories, the individual is elevated to the level of the society and has the same moral and ethical authority that has always been reserved for group consensus or the elites. Freud, on the heels of Einstein's revelations and restructuring of modern physics, began publishing his theories of the unconscious. "Beyond the Pleasure Principle" and "The Ego and the Id" lay the foundation for Freud's conception of the id, ego, and superego, but he focuses singularly on the unsettled nature of the individual's psyche, but in his "Civilization and Its Discontents," published just before the rise of the Third Reich in Germany, Freud extends his analysis of the individual's psyche to its interaction with the community around it, making it an ideal psychoanalytic text for analyzing the modern *Bildungsroman*. In the essay, Freud anticipates Foucault's argument about the individual's internalization of the

[3] For more information on the historical context and effect of Einstein's gravitational theories on the scientific community as well as the general public, see L. Pearce Williams's Relativity Theory: Its Origins and Impact on Modern Thought.

community's rules and regulations.

Where Foucault adopts Bentham's Panopticon as his guiding metaphor to describe the individual's sense of guilt caused by nature of the surveillance state, Freud uses his concepts of the id, ego, and superego. These revelations about the role of the community in the individual's life are extremely significant to the development of the modern *Bildungsroman*. Freud's recognition of this normalization reflects a larger wave of scrutiny toward authority that abounded in the twentieth-century, and this change in perception had an effect on the way that writers chose to write the *Bildungsroman*. Often, the hero of the Victorian *Bildungsroman* successfully finds a way to become a socialized member of the community and achieve his/her own personal ambitions, but the modern *Bildungsroman* questions the viability of successfully compromising one's personal ambitions with societal norms; additionally, the modern *Bildungsroman* raises questions about society's role in creating one's personal ambitions, and Freud's revelations about the individual's fractured self give modern writers a psychoanalytic explanation for modernity's perception of its fractured and broken world.

It is undeniable that society plays a pivotal role in the development of the individual, and that role is reflected in the literature of the time. Since the late eighteenth-century, the *Bildungsroman* has been formative in the perpetuating social normalization as well as the vitality of the community, but the genre has varied over the centuries. Sammons argues that the *Bildungsroman* should always in contact with the concept of *bildung*: "I think that the Bildungsroman should have something to do with Bildung, that is, with the early bourgeois, humanistic concept of the shaping of the individual self from its innate potentialities through acculturation and social experience to the threshold of

maturity" (41). Sammons goes to clarify that even if the individual does not achieve the goal set for himself/herself in life or society, it does not matter.

The individual's innate potential may be problematic, but Sammons's understanding of the *Bildungsroman* as a shaping of the individual through societal assimilation and social experience is key to my argument about the English tradition's transition from the Victorian to the modern *Bildungsroman*. I argue that external forces in society have a truly significant impact on the creation of the self. Society molds the individual into a very of himself/herself that is in compliance with the society's values and regulations. However, the self that the individual builds up is simply a social construction. In the modern *Bildungsroman*, the seemingly complete version of the self that the classical *Bildungsroman* points toward is undermined by Freud's understanding of the psyche as an amalgamation of the individual's primitive desires, incorporation of the society's mores, and the balancing act between the two.

The *Bildungsroman* as a genre remains important for literary scholarship, despite assertions that it is somehow out-of-date, because it helps demarcate the transition from epic poetry to the novel, and Morgenstern suggests this much. He argues that the age determines the literature of the time; he contends that the epic poem and the novel differ on three major points: the "marvelous" is essential to the epic poem but not the novel; the plot of the epic poem can be extended through the hero "to the fate of one or more nations, and even to that of all mankind," whereas the novel's plot only concerns the hero and the characters who interact with him/her; and the epic "portrays the hero as acting on the external world and as bringing about important changes to it," whereas the novel "depicts the influence that men and environments exert on the hero and explains to us the

gradual formation of his inner being" (654). Morgenstern's three points may seem crude and reductive, but his argument is helpful: there is a massive shift from the age of the epic poem to the age of the novel, and in that change we see a significant rethinking of the role of the hero.

In the twentieth-century, Mikhail Bakhtin, the Soviet theoretician, picks up and revamps Morgenstern's basic distinction between the epic poem and novel in his essay "The Bildungsroman and Its Significance in the History of Realism (Toward a Historical Typology of the Novel)"[4] to discuss subcategories of the novel. Unlike Morgenstern, Bakhtin argues that most novels (not just heroic epics, as Morgenstern asserts) feature a kind of "ready-made" hero:

> All movement in the novel, all events and escapades depicted in it, shifts the hero in space, up and down the rungs of the social ladder: from beggar to rich man, from homeless tramp to nobleman. The hero sometimes attains, sometimes only approaches his goal: the bride, the victory, wealth, and so on. Events change his destiny, change his position in life and society, but he himself remains unchanged and adequate to himself. (20)

Further, Bakhtin goes on to argue that the majority of subcategories are built around the concept of the unchanging hero, the "static nature of his unity." According to Bakhtin, the hero "is a constant in the novel's formula and all other quantities—the spacial environment, social position, fortune, in brief, all aspects of the hero's life and destiny—

[4] As a result of the outbreak of World War II and Bakhtin's habitual smoking, this essay exists as a fragment. The essay was to be published in a book of the same name, but during the war, the publishing house was destroyed and, because of a paper shortage, Bakhtin resorted to using his manuscript as wrappers for his cigarettes.

can therefore be variables" (21). It is easy to draw a parallel from Bakhtin's understanding of the "ready-made" hero of most novels and Morgenstern's understanding of the epic hero. Bakhtin's understanding of the *Bildungsroman* hero is also very close to Morgenstern's understanding of the novel's hero: in the *Bildungsroman*, "one finds a dynamic unity in the hero's image. The hero himself, his character, becomes a variable in the formula of this type of novel. Changes in the hero himself acquire plot significance, and thus the entire plot of the novel is reinterpreted and reconstructed" (21).

The novelist's interest in the channeling and representing the development of the hero has not abated since Morgenstern compared the novel to the heroic epic, and Bakhtin's interest in the hero's development reflects the vitality of this genre in the twentieth-century, despite arguments questioning the helpfulness of the term in criticism. However, modernism introduces a radically different type of *Bildungsroman*; while still incorporating the development of the hero, the modern *Bildungsroman* uses conventions from the classical tradition to scrutinize the community's role in developing the individual as well as unity of the individual's own psyche.

III. *Sons and Lovers* and the Modern *Bildungsroman*

> But to be a good little boy like all the other good little boys is to be at last a slave, or at least an automaton, running on wheels.
>
> - D. H. Lawrence, "Enslaved by Civilisation"

Though Lawrence's novel *Sons and Lovers* never makes specific mention of the discoveries of Freud, the text shows evidence of the skeptical undercurrents and definitive shifts in worldview that would set the scene for the transformational scientific revelations that these two thinkers sparked. In this early novel, Lawrence casts a distrustful eye on the supreme authority of religion and the state, two foundational concepts for the classical *Bildungsroman*. Lawrence's personal scrutiny of England's institutionalized education of its young boys speaks to his conception of an individual's development in modernity. In her book *D. H. Lawrence: A Personal Record* (1935), Jessie Chambers, Lawrence's girlfriend and the model for Miriam's character in the novel, writes, "Lawrence was loath to admit that boyhood was over" (42). For Lawrence, boyhood is a distinctive time, and in his nonfiction writing, Lawrence emphasizes its uniqueness. In his essay "Enslaved by Civilisation" (1929), Lawrence argues that in England schoolmistresses form English schoolboys into good little boys, and in their formation of the boys, the schoolmistresses put the boys on fixed rails that they ride for their entire lives:

> School is a very elaborate railway-system where good little boys are taught to run upon good lines till they are shunted off into life, at the age

> of fourteen, sixteen or whatever it is. And by that age the running-on-lines habit is absolutely fixed. The good big boy merely turns off one set of rails on to another. And it is so easy, running on rails, he never realises that he is a slave to the rails he runs on. Good boy! (157)

Though Lawrence's essay is subtly permeated with his own infamous misogyny, the railroad metaphor captures the arresting power of the system to trap individuals on a predetermined path. Lawrence calls this a habit, but his essay makes it clear that he considers English schoolboys' line running quite sinister; further, Lawrence extends the predetermined path beyond the schoolhouse to every facet of an individual's life. In this essay, Lawrence shows his unabashed contempt for social normalization through the institute of education. For Lawrence, England's socialization of little boys is particularly heinous because women primarily form the boys, but the argument can be easily extended to girls as well. "Enslaved by Civilisation" is one of Lawrence's late essays, but, putting aside his gendered approach, the central conflict in *Sons and Lovers*, the community's attempted social coercion of Paul, anticipates his argument against the school and larger social apparatus that invisibly guides the individual through life.[5]

As I have discussed earlier, protagonists in Victorian *Bildungsromane* are generally developed through the community's active role in his/her social normalization, or, to use Lawrence's railway metaphor, the community's role in placing the individual on a rail that will ultimately lead him/her to a predictable place. Lawrence's protagonist Paul begins his journey from adolescence to adulthood like many protagonists of

[5] In "The Instance of the Letter in the Unconscious, or Reason Since Freud" (1957) Jacques Lacan revises Ferdinand de Saussure's concepts of sign and signifier to make a similar argument about individuals sliding along predetermined linguistic rails.

Bildungsromane from previous generations, but Paul's unwillingness to participate in his own process of development sets him apart from his literary forebears. In this chapter, I will examine two specific rites of passage that Paul must navigate, choosing a profession as well as a spouse; I will compare and contrast the classical conception of the *Bildungsroman* and its more notable characteristics to Lawrence's early example of the modern *Bildungsroman*. I will use Goethe's *Wilhelm Meister's Apprenticeship* as the classical *Bildungsroman* example and Dickens's *David Copperfield* as the Victorian *Bildungsroman* example.

Though *Sons and Lovers* is typically characterized as a *Bildungsroman*, Lawrence's novel undermines the traditional *Bildungsroman*; a significant portion of the novel plots the maturation of Paul, but it does not follow the traditional conventions of the genre. It is obvious that Paul owes his progression toward adulthood to the people around him, undermining the focus on individualism in the traditional *Bildungsroman*. In her criticism of the novel, Woolf argues that *Sons and Lovers* makes the reader feel uneasy: "[o]ne of the curious qualities of *Sons and Lovers* is that one feels an unrest, a little quiver and shimmer in his page, as if it were composed of separate gleaming objects, by no means content to stand still and be looked at" (353). It is conceivable that the dissonance that she describes can be attributed to Lawrence's fractured presentation of his characters but especially Paul as he transitions between adolescence and adulthood. While *Sons and Lovers* is not a traditional *Bildungsroman*, it is clearly related to the German genre.

Lawrence called the writing of *Sons and Lovers* the shedding of his sickness, but in shedding that sickness, Lawrence imposes it on Paul, his fictional counterpart. As an

autobiographical novel, *Sons and Lovers* is therapeutic for Lawrence. Through the writing of the novel, Lawrence achieves his artistic maturation, but, as a result, his fictional proxy, Paul, takes on his own insecurities and instability and never fully recovers. As Lawrence's fictional counterpart, Paul takes on the burden of Lawrence's artistic paralysis.

Lawrence's interest in psychology is evident throughout *Sons and Lovers*, particularly Paul's love for his mother and hatred for his father. As a result, an overwhelming majority of *Sons and Lovers* criticism focuses on two interconnected themes: Lawrence's use and unique interpretation of Freud's Oedipus complex and Lawrence's representation of women, particularly Gertrude. Because *Sons and Lovers* is Lawrence's autobiographical novel, the critical conversation frequently discusses Lawrence's life, drawing parallels between Lawrence's relationship to his mother and Paul's relationship to Gertrude as well as Lawrence's views toward women. These two concepts have played a central part in *Sons and Lovers* criticism for good reason: *Sons and Lovers* is an unmistakable literary interpretation of the Oedipus complex. Until the publication of Weiss's *Oedipus in Nottingham: D. H. Lawrence*, perhaps the most definitive and significant work of psychoanalytic criticism on the novel, other aspects of *Sons and Lovers* were briefly mentioned.

While a thorough investigation of Lawrence's use of Freud's theory and his representations of women are fruitful endeavors and are necessary for a comprehensive body of criticism on the novel, often these features of the novel monopolize the critical conversation, creating an obstructed view of the novel. Often, critics will mention *Sons and Lovers* as an English *Bildungsroman*, but generally, critics have not focused

primarily on the novel's literary tradition. More often than not, critics take the novel's narrative structure for granted, overlooking Lawrence's specifically modernist interpretation of the *Bildungsroman*. Unfortunately, when critics assume that there is a common definition for the *Bildungsroman*, they reduce the *Bildungsroman* to the coming of age story, missing the subtle nuances of the genre which span from socio-political dynamics to much more specific sub-genres operating under the umbrella term "*Bildungsroman*."

In "*Sons and Lovers* as Bildungsroman," Richard D. Beards explains the traditional *Bildungsroman* in a few points: "The *Bildungsroman* ("novel of self-development" or "apprenticeship novel" are the best English equivalents) features a protagonist, an apprenticeship to life, whose goal is to master it so that he can achieve an ideal or ambition, fulfillment of which will heighten his sense of self" (205). Though he does not cite any specific translation or interpretation of the term, Beards's *Bildungsroman* definition allows him to discuss protagonist Paul Morel's development throughout *Sons and Lovers*. Beards's argument hinges on his idea that *Sons and Lovers* is really more like a classical *Bildungsroman* than a new and revolutionary iteration of the genre. While Beards's argument is certainly defensible, *Sons and Lovers* makes meaningful breaks from the genre's tradition that complicate Beards's conservative interpretation of the novel.

The classical *Bildungsroman* requires the protagonist's teleological growth, and in the Victorian *Bildungsroman*, the protagonist is still required to develop positively. Because it assumes a kind of developmental ideal at the end of the protagonist's development, the apprentice must continue to move forward constantly throughout the

novel. Unlike the Victorian *Bildungsroman*, a number of early twentieth-century novels shun this teleological model of character development in order to complicate such a simplistic development narrative. In a sense, the modern *Bildungsroman* is an extension of one of modernism's larger ambitions to develop new ways of representing the world most realistically than realism is capable. Lawrence rejects a straightforward and even development and emphasizes rough, jagged, and potentially incomplete development. In his essay, "Why the Novel Matters," Lawrence explains his notion of character development, and he stresses the artificiality of a character's smooth and even development. In an attempt to capture *life*, Lawrence infuses his characters with an extremely sophisticated psychological realism.[6]

I argue that Lawrence's *Sons and Lovers* offers an early viable alternative to the classical *Bildungsroman*; it is one of the earliest examples of a specifically modernist *Bildungsroman*. Railing against the humanist undertones present in the classic *Bildungsroman*, Lawrence's novel underlines the importance of the community on the individual. Lawrence distinguishes his novel from its predecessors in his treatment of the protagonist's socialization. Though Lawrence utilizes a number of the characteristics of the traditional *Bildungsroman*, his handling of the protagonist's socialization challenges the traditional form of the novel's simplistic teleological projection. Lawrence emphasizes the protagonist's traditional struggle to become part of society, but unlike earlier *Bildungsromane*, Lawrence does not resolve this tension; Paul's struggle is ultimately in vain. Lawrence underscores the impossibility of the attainment of Paul's

[6] This is true is Lawrence's short stories and novellas as well as his novels. For specific examples of Lawrence's use of psychological realism, see "Odour of Chrysanthemums" (1911), "The Blind Man" (1922), and The Fox (1922).

artistic desires as well as successful socialization. In this chapter, I will focus on three aspects of Paul's development: his economic, artistic, and romantic maturity.

Paul's development throughout his youth suggests a teleological projection, typical in the classical and Victorian *Bildungsroman*. Economically, Paul grows out of the shyness and self-consciousness that plague his collection of his father's paycheck as well as his interview with Thomas Jordan, and he eventually enjoys working and becomes popular among his female coworkers; and artistically, Paul, over time, becomes a regionally-renowned artist and can sell his art for a profit; and romantically, Paul leaves his mother and pursues a number of women. However, upon closer inspection, these seemingly positive indications of teleological development eventually break down, and Paul's inability to become a totally socialized individual becomes apparent. This shift in the *Bildungsroman* is not just a reflection of one single writer's rebellious attitude toward industrialization, though Lawrence was a fierce critic of it. This shift reflects a much larger rejection of a number of social tenets that once marked the path of development in previous generations, epitomized by the *Bildungsromane* of the nineteenth-century.

Lawrence makes Paul's maturation an integral part of the lives of a number of characters; in doing so, Lawrence shows the large network of connections that each seemingly individual character must make and maintain in order to achieve maturation. For example, Paul's development is intricately connected to the development of other characters in the novel. Paul's coming of age is a result of neither God's active transformation of him nor his own active transformation of himself through innate potential. Gertrude, Miriam, and Clara actively push the passive Paul through his physical as well as mental development. As a result, these three women collectively

represent the broader community. They make demands on Paul's time and effort, and he is expected to conform to their desires and their idea of what he should be.

Walking in the Footsteps and the Threat of Death

Because a significant portion of the novel occurs before Paul's birth, *Sons and Lovers* does not focus on Paul singularly. Paul is the novel's hero, but Lawrence constantly emphasizes that Paul is part of a larger network. There are other *Bildungsroman* stories told before Paul takes the center stage in the novel. In the opening chapter seems to indicate that Gertrude Morel's story will be the singular focus of this novel, and in fact, Lawrence writes a kind of *Bildungsroman* in miniature for Gertrude.

In looking back over her life, Gertrude remembers the seminal moments that have brought her to this point; she remembers her parent's discipline, first love, and her rage against the patriarchy. Interestingly, *Sons and Lovers* features a kind of dark parody of the Victorian *Bildungsroman* that exists independent of Paul's own development: Paul's older brother William's development and eventual death. Smart and handsome, William takes on the individualistic characteristics of a typical *Bildungsroman* protagonist. Lawrence divides the novel in two parts: Part I follows Gertrude through the first years of marriage and William's projection into adulthood. After leaving his family for a job in London, William quickly begins to rise into the middle class and enters a courtship with Louisa Lily Denys Western that leads to their engagement.

Throughout his life, William achieves great accomplishments; he moves from the job his mother got him at the Co-op to a job in London, the Mecca of traditional Victorian *Bildungsromane*. Initially, it looks as though William has successfully broken away from the Morels and achieved the maturation required of a successful Victorian

Bildungsroman hero; however, William's storyline quickly begins to resemble much more of a cautionary tale than a traditional *Bildungsroman*. After William gets the job in London, he becomes ill and dies. William's *bildung* is cut short before he completely matures. Lawrence writes William as Paul's predecessor in many ways, but William's demise comes to symbolize the metaphorical death of the Victorian *Bildungsroman*. On the threat of death, Paul cannot follow William's footsteps.

In *Sons and Lovers*, Lawrence writes William as the archetypical Victorian *Bildungsroman* protagonist. William is a minor character throughout much of the first chapter, but by the second chapter, aptly titled "The Casting off of Morel, the Taking on of William," he is one of the novel's central characters. At this point in the novel, Gertrude gets William, age thirteen, his first job at the Co-operative Wholesale Society office in Bestwood. At the same time, William enters a night-school and becomes one of the best clerks and bookkeepers around; eventually, he begins teaching at the night-school. The narrator, adopting Gertrude's perspective, explains, "[a]ll things that men do—the decent things—William did" (70). He gives all his earnings to Gertrude, and every month she gives him back two shillings. With the small amount of money that his mother gives back, William makes friends with "the bourgeois of Bestwood," and, inspiring Gertrude's ire, he begins dancing and flirting with girls. At nineteen, William gets a job in Nottingham and works there for a year before moving to London. Though he ultimately declines the offer, William's boss offers him a trip abroad, boating in the Mediterranean. While in London, William meets Louisa Lily Denys Western, affectionately known as "Gyp." William's development follows a familiar pattern for the *Bildungsroman*: he leaves his home town, begins his formal education, moves to the city,

enters the professional world, and has a romantic relationship.

Simultaneously, Paul undertakes his own path of development, following in William's footsteps. By fourteen, Paul has already started school and knows some French and German as well as mathematics. Additionally, at this pivotal moment in his life, Gertrude forces him to enter the workforce. William writes Paul's letter inquiring into the job, and after a rather brutal interview with Thomas Jordan, Paul becomes Jordan's junior spiral clerk, a job in the same field that William studied. Paul grows up quickly, and the narrator's description of his physical appearance suggests his accelerated development as well as a physical likeness to William: "His face had already lost its youthful chubbiness, and was becoming somewhat like William's, rough-featured, almost rugged, and it was extraordinarily mobile" (113).

By this point in the novel, William has become extremely successful professional and socially; he has carved out a successful path of development that Paul is easily tracing. However, Lawrence begins to subtly undermine William's successes. Though William's letters seem to suggest that he is in love with Gyp, when she enters the novel and meets the Morels at Christmas, William treats her poorly and derides her to his mother: "'You know she's not like you, mother—she's not serious--and she can't think'" (146). Later, William rails against Gyp in front of the Morels: "'She's religious—she has blue velvet prayerbooks—and she's not as much religion, or anything else, in her than that table leg. Gets confirmed three times, for show, to show herself off. And that's how she is in *everything*, *everything*!'" (163).

When he returns to London, even his profession begins to look gilded. When William begins to look growingly weary and gaunt, Gertrude suggests that he is working

too hard. William admits to his mother that he has been doing extra work, trying to "make some money to marry on" (165). William catches pneumonia as a complication of erysipelas.[7] William blames the infection on his collar, a physical representation of his professional life. When Gertrude visits him on his deathbed, he speaks nonsense about his job in the Port of London: "'Owing to a leakage in the hold of the vessel, the sugar had set, and become converted into rock. It needed hacking—'" (166). William struggles for much of the night but eventually dies.[8]

Lawrence makes the connection between William's work and his illness very explicit, and, taken with William's earlier dismissive attitude concerning Gyp, Lawrence appears to be scrutinizing two central themes of the *Bildungsroman* genre. Lawrence emphasizes Paul's close following of William in Paul's own bout with pneumonia after William's death. Gertrude even asks the doctor, "'[m]ight he never have had it if I'd kept him at home, not let him go to Nottingham?'" (171). In this question, Lawrence uses Gertrude's maternal inclinations to equate illness and work; Nottingham is metonymic reference to Paul's professional life, directly, as well as William's professional life, indirectly.

William follows the traditional pattern for a *Bildungsroman* protagonist relatively faithfully, and in many ways he is an exemplar for the traditional *Bildungsroman* hero: he is intelligent, ambitions, adventurous, and he fulfills many of the rites of passage common to the *Bildungsroman*; but, Lawrence cuts William's development short.

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[7] Erysipelas, also known as "St. Anthony's Fire," is a bacterial disease that affects the skin.

[8] This particular scene is particularly autobiographical; Lawrence's older brother William also died when Lawrence was young.

Arguably, Lawrence uses William's death to represent the death of the Victorian *Bildungsroman*. The trajectory that William attempts to follow simply is not applicable in his thoroughly modern world, and as a result, William becomes a victim of the shifting sociopolitical sands beneath him. Fascinatingly, Lawrence does not clearly outline the differences between William's world and the world of the generations that came before him. Instead, Lawrence leaves the changes ambiguous, creating tension not just for Paul but also for the reader.

In a sense, William's death marks a significant turning point for the novel; William's death and Paul's illness concludes "Death in the Family" as well as part one of the novel. In Part I, Lawrence spends a significant amount of time developing Gertrude, Walter, William, and Paul, but in Part II, Paul becomes the unquestionable central protagonist of the novel. By the time of William's death, Paul has followed William's path all the way to the abyss and can follow no longer. At this pivotal moment in the novel, Paul must choose his own course of development, but it is not one that is readily evident. At the junction of Part I and Part II, Lawrence's novel truly becomes a transitional text for the *Bildungsroman* genre. In burying William and the Victorian *Bildungsroman* in Part I, Lawrence clears the way for a new kind of novel of development and redefine the successful *bildung*.

Throughout *Sons and Lovers*, Lawrence juxtaposes Paul's professional and romantic precariousness and unreliability with the other characters' expectations, highlighting Paul's difference, his otherness. As the plot develops, Paul begins to exhibit an artistic inclination, and this inclination emphasizes Paul's otherness even further.

Paul's artistic sensibilities clash with the pragmatism that is characteristic of his English mining town; however, Paul is unwilling to truly undertake the life of an artist.

Lawrence utilizes the clash of Paul's artistic sensibilities and English pragmatism to construct a protagonist stricken with a kind of artistic paralysis, an inescapable quagmire that limits both Paul's ability to grow as an artist as well as his ability to develop as a human being. As he struggles to come to terms with the responsibilities thrust on him by his family, lovers, and aspirations, Paul's artistic development comes to a screeching halt, never fully realizing his role as a son, lover, or artist. Lawrence places Paul in a liminal space between artistic individualism and pragmatic socialization. Because Paul is incapable of fully embracing either the otherness of the artist or the uniformity of the English class structure he inherits, Paul flounders as an individual artist and as a socialized member of society; however, Paul's failure as an artist should not be equated with Lawrence's failure as a novelist.

The Monetary Cost of Development

One of Lawrence's fundamental breaks from the Victorian *Bildungsroman* is Paul's professional life. Additionally, money places a powerful impetus on Paul; it is the key to successfully assimilating into the capitalist community in which he was born. In naming Paul, Gertrude indirectly makes him a part of the community; van Gennep explains that "[w]hen a child is named, he is both individualized and incorporated into society" (van Gennep 62). Even before Paul becomes self-aware, he passively begins his development toward adulthood. Throughout *Sons and Lovers*, Lawrence juxtaposes Paul's professional and romantic precariousness and unreliability with the other characters' expectations, highlighting Paul's difference, his otherness. As the plot

develops, Paul begins to exhibit an artistic inclination, and this inclination emphasizes Paul's otherness even further.

Paul's artistic sensibilities clash with the pragmatism that is characteristic of his English mining town; however, Paul is unwilling to truly undertake the life of an artist. Paul's reluctance to work reflects his reluctance to enter the community, to become part of the society. Paul embodies the challenge to the institutionalized superego. Like Foucault's Panopticon metaphor, the community's values attempt to situate themselves securely in Paul's psyche, but Paul actively resists it, foiling the community's effort to socialize him. Paul clings to his childhood desires before he is ultimately forced into his first job interview. Lawrence utilizes the clash of Paul's artistic sensibilities and English pragmatism to construct a protagonist stricken with a kind of artistic paralysis, an inescapable quagmire that limits both Paul's ability to grow as an artist as well as his ability to develop as a human being.

As he struggles to come to terms with the responsibilities thrust on him by his family, lovers, and aspirations, Paul's artistic development comes to a screeching halt, never fully realizing his role as a son, lover, or artist. Lawrence places Paul in a liminal space between artistic individualism and pragmatic socialization. Because Paul is incapable of fully embracing either the otherness of the artist or the uniformity of the English class structure he inherits, Paul flounders as an individual artist and as a socialized member of society; however, Paul's failure as an artist should not be equated with Lawrence's failure as a novelist. The great success of *Sons and Lovers* is Lawrence's critique of the traditional *Bildungsroman* and his renewal of the classic genre, refashioning it for modernity.

In “Metaphor in the 19th Century Novel: From the Bildungsroman to the Novel of Lifelong Learning,” Alessio Ceccherelli and Emiliano Ilardi explain that nineteenth-century novelists avoided “being obliged to speak about work in a romantic plot” simply through choosing a teenager as a protagonist (57). Wage labor disappears in the nineteenth-century *Bildungsroman*. However, as I will show, Paul’s entire life is inundated with wage labor; work not only influences Paul's development but it actively directs it. Though an Englishman at the height of the British Empire’s power, Paul's poverty sets him apart from other modernist *Bildungsroman* protagonists. Lawrence’s *Sons and Lovers* features a lower-class protagonist who has a different path to maturation than other modernist *Bildungsroman* protagonists. Paul is forced into a working environment and into his own work at a very early age. Early in his life, Paul aspires to be an artist, but a monetary responsibility to his family holds him back. In order to keep the family above water, Gertrude forces Paul to find a job and help sustain the family unit. In the novel, Lawrence presents work and art as mutually exclusive, so Paul’s early determination to be an artist is complicated by his responsibility to his family. But even before Gertrude forces Paul to get a job, money plays a decisive role in Paul’s life; financial struggles limit Paul’s ability to truly undertake his development as an artist.

As early as the first chapter, the Morel family is already in financial crisis. Wife and mother Gertrude Morel waits for her husband Walter, the family’s coal mining patriarch, to return home after a bout of drinking at the Moon and Stars, a local public house. While the Morel’s children, William and Annie (Paul has not yet been born), sleep upstairs, Gertrude considers the state of her life:

> The world seemed a dreary place, where nothing else would happen for her—at least until William grew up. But for herself, nothing but this dreary endurance—till the children grew up. And the children! She could not afford to have this third. She did not want it. The father was serving beer in a public house, swilling himself drunk. (13).

The coming child, Paul, is the novel's central protagonist, the hero of this *Bildungsroman*, and yet even before his entrance into the novel, he is unwanted. Gertrude no longer loves Walter, and the family cannot afford another child. Gertrude's own sense of worth is tied up in William's development, and Paul, even before his birth, seems like a completely monetized being. Another scene, told in a flashback sequence seven months after the marriage, describes Gertrude's reaction after finding unpaid bills in Walter's coat pocket. Because Lawrence includes this scene before Paul's birth, poverty frames Paul's entire course of development, and because of this added financial pressure, an overwhelming desire to financially justify his existence dominates Paul's development. Essentially, Paul's very existence is monetized. Even before he is born, Paul's mother thinks of him simply as a drain on the family's financial resources. In addition to adding this level of complexity to Paul's character development, framing Paul's story of development with the story of the Morel family's financial struggles as a whole adds another layer to the Victorian *Bildungsroman* plot.

Working at Thomas Jordan's factory gives Paul financial stability and security, but he constantly returns to art as a viable alternative to the traditional professional world in which his mother forces him to take part. In a sense, art comes to represent Paul's instinctual desires; it becomes symbolic of his id. In the same way that Lawrence uses

Gertrude to present the society's rules and regulations and inscribe them on Paul, forming the superego, art functions as a primary desire in Paul. Art offers Paul an avenue for escaping the tight restrictions of the industrialized world; art, as an individual creation, stands in stark contrast to factories of mass production. In this way, art in *Sons and Lovers* reflects and participates in a much broader discussion about art at the turn of the century.

Paul's art eventually begins to show promise. At twenty-three, he wins first prize at an exhibition at Nottingham Castle, and Gertrude finally embraces her son as an artist. Paul wins first prize for his painting, but the painting also sells for twenty guineas, and Gertrude celebrates the win but also the landscape's selling price. For Gertrude, Paul's artistic abilities remain intricately tied to their monetary value; in a way, Gertrude, again acting as a material representation of the community, degrades Paul's artistic vision by regarding its monetary value so highly. Lawrence uses her discussion of the landscape's selling price as a way to further characterize her as a representation of the community's monetary and professional values.

The narrator explains that Paul's landscape wins the exhibition but never mentions that the painting sold; only Gertrude's dialogue explains that the painting has sold. Paul's father, Walter, understands Paul's art similarly, but he puts it into even more strictly economic terms; Gertrude tells him that the painting has sold for twenty guineas, and Walter cannot believe it. She chides him by explaining that the landscape was worth it, and Walter agrees: "'Ay!' he said. 'I don't misdoubt it.—But twenty guineas for a bit of a paintin' as he knocked off in an hour or two—!'" (296). Walter's understanding of art is straightforwardly economic; in combining the time that Paul took to paint the

landscape with the selling price, Walter's forthright comparison of Paul's artistic creation and the amount of time it takes Paul to create the piece is a blunt reminder of capitalism's influence at the turn of the century; it undermines Paul's artistic project and reduces the particular piece to two hours' work and twenty guineas.

Gertrude's interest in the economics of Paul's artistic ability varies slightly from Walter's, and it is tied to one of the most common tropes in the Victorian *Bildungsroman*: social mobility. In this particular scene, Gertrude sees Paul's art as a monetarily viable alternative to traditional labor; she "*wanted* him to climb into the middle classes, a thing not very difficult, she knew. And she wanted him in the end to marry a lady" (299) but Paul rejects that notion and calls the common people his people. Gertrude asks Paul why he wants to concern himself with common people, and he explains that "'the difference between people isn't in their class, but in themselves.–Only from the middle classes, one gets ideas, and from the common people—life itself, warmth'" (298).[9] For Paul, and many modern artists, art is the antidote for industrialism and consumerism, so when Gertrude and Walter assign a monetary and labor value to his piece, a material representation of his rejection of the economic, they undermine his artistic sensibilities.

To counterbalance the commodification of his art, Paul eventually comes to understand artistic creation not as the creation of a good but a creation of life; near the end of the novel, Lawrence comes the closest to explaining Paul's artistic project, even if

[9] In "Notes on D. H. Lawrence," Woolf misreads this particular scene; she explains that Paul, like Lawrence, wants to climb out of his class and be a gentleman, but in the novel, Gertrude wants Paul to become part of the middle class. In this scene, Lawrence uses dialogue tags sparingly, creating the potential for confusion. However, Paul's rejection of Gertrude's wish is critical to Lawrence's questioning of the Victorian Bildungsroman's concern with social mobility and class structure.

Paul is not immediately aware of the implications: "'But you can go on with your painting,' said the will in him. 'Or else you can beget children'" (456). Though Paul is not consciously aware of that creating art and creating life are diametrically opposed before this scene near the end of the novel, Lawrence makes the reader keenly aware of it. Lawrence directly undercuts Paul's economic and social development in order to highlight his sexual development.

Romance, Sex, and the Failed Marriage Plot

In the classical *Bildungsroman*, the process of courtship helps educate the protagonist and eventually leads to marriage or the promise of marriage. In *Sons and Lovers*, Lawrence pushes against the community's tight regulation of sexuality; Lawrence rather openly writes about Paul's sexual experiences with his childhood love Miriam, portrayed as innocent and virginal, and his married lover Clara, portrayed as sultry and promiscuous. In similar yet distinct ways, Miriam and Clara attempt to mature Paul through sexuality; Lawrence writes these women to be the symbolic role of the community. Through them, Paul learns about his own sexuality, but they also teach and impose upon him the community's social mores regarding sexuality and marriage.

In his courtship with Miriam, Paul learns to love, but his mother's constant deriding of Miriam weighs heavily on his relationship. When he becomes aware of his sexuality, he is ashamed of it: "[i]f he could have kissed [Miriam] in abstract purity he would have done so. But he could not kiss her thus—and she seemed to leave no other way. And she yearned to him" (226). In a sense, Gertrude becomes a blocking figure, and she comes to represent the community's Christian-based values regarding sexuality; through Gertrude, Paul has been infected with guilt about his sexuality. In this scene, one

can see Paul trying to abstract his sexual desire into a kind of platonic realm, and in doing so, he unconsciously acts out the community's sexual regulations. Through Gertrude, the community constructs Paul's superego, though he is unconscious of it.

Eventually, Paul acts out against his mother's rules (and by extension, the rules of the community). He leaves his mother to visit Miriam while she keeps her grandmother's cottage in Woodlinton, and the two have sex for the first time. In this scene, because they are unmarried, Paul and Miriam break the community's rules that regulate sexuality. While Paul's sexual activity is illicit according to the community, he acts out a kind of husband and wife scenario before he has sex with Miriam, thus attempting to pretend that he is acting in accordance to the society's norms regarding sexuality and marriage. Though they are unmarried, the lovers assume their prescribed gender roles and perform the role of the wife and husband. The novel describes Miriam as "busy preparing dinner," "cooking a chicken in his honor" (332). Miriam, taking on the role of Paul's wife, seamlessly transitions from Paul's childhood love to his de facto wife and lover. Similarly, Paul assumes the role of a husband, watching Miriam cook and carving. After the meal, Paul leads Miriam to the back of the small cottage and the novel explains that she gives her body to him as a "sacrifice" (334).[10]

[10] Though much can be written about Lawrence's choice to use word "sacrifice" to describe Miriam's participation in the sexual act, it will not be my main focus in this thesis. Lawrence's understanding of sexuality is highly misogynistic, and Miriam's "sacrifice" of her body unquestionably raises questions about his understanding of gender roles. Lawrence's "The Woman Who Rode Away" (1925) concludes with a quite literally sacrifice of a woman at the hands of a Native American tribe. Many scholars, perhaps most notably Kate Millet, deride the sacrifice of women in Lawrence's work as blatantly misogynistic. For more information, see Millet's *Sexual Politics* (1970).

Through Miriam, we are presented with Paul's conception of sexuality: "'I believe as you do, that loving, even in *that* way, is the high-water mark of living'" (335); however, despite Paul's apparent regard for the importance of sex, life's "high-water mark," both Miriam and Paul have difficulty conceiving of sex without the framework of marriage. Miriam reflects on a lesson that her mother taught her about marriage, holding that, though it remains unnamed, sex is the one thing in marriage that will always be dreadful, but it is inescapable. For Miriam, sex is a component of marriage, and in having sex with Paul outside of wedlock, she has committed a great transgression; she must put the sex into the marital framework in order to understand it. Similarly, Paul at first uses marriage to understand sex, but after he has experienced it, after his "initiation," he feels satisfied and no longer requires marriage to make sense of his sexuality. In this instance, just after Paul and Miriam lose their virginity, Miriam transitions from her prior role as an agent of sexual liberation to an agent of sexual regulation, aligning her purpose with Gertrude's. After having sex with Paul, Lawrence portrays Miriam as a kind of trap, a keeper of marital traditions and regulated sexuality. Miriam joins Gertrude as a physical representation of the community's sexual regulation.

When Paul realizes that Miriam maintains the same sexual mores of his mother's generation, he has to break away; the marital rite of passage would firmly put Paul in a different position in society from which he would not be able to later distance himself. Marriage, as Castle points out, is one of the telltale indication of the completion of the protagonist's development and entrance into the community: "[i]n Goethe text, marriage functions as a microcosm and material sign of the hero's acquisition of Bildung" (17). Marriage marks the transition for Wilhelm, and in Dickens's *David Copperfield*, David's

marriage to Dora, though relatively short lived, signals his completed development, his *Bildung*.[11] Lawrence, however, does not offer the reader a firm footing in this regard; Paul is unwilling to marry, but he must find a way to satisfy his primal sexual desires after Miriam closes herself off to him.

Though Miriam began Paul's sexual education, for Miriam intimacy is always interconnected with wedlock; Paul's rejection of such a fundamental characteristic of the Victorian *Bildungsroman* exemplifies one of Lawrence's most substantial breaks from the tradition. Lawrence uses Clara as a material representation of this break. In an interesting and unconventional way, Clara functions as a blocking character. Paul becomes obsessed with Clara's sexuality and uses her for his own sexual gratification but also as an alternative to marriage's conventionally regulated sexual practices.[12] Because Clara is married to Baxter Dawes, Paul cannot possibly marry her; in Clara and her sexuality, Paul finds an escape from Miriam and his mother's regulations. He can indulge in his sexual desires without being forced to accept marriage as a rite of passage. But this type of relationship cannot exist in an extremely sexually regulated society, so the community, in the form of Baxter, forcibly normalizes Paul's behavior. When Baxter attacks Paul and injures him, he curtails Paul's exaggerated sexuality and seriously compromises Clara's independence. In this fight, Baxter enforces the power of the

[11] As discussed in Chapter II, *David Copperfield* continues after David's marriage to Dora, but at that particular point in the novel, David is living harmoniously within the community; he has assumed his role and acts in accordance with his social status.
[12] Weiss argues that Paul's interest in Clara stems from her unavailability. Because she is married to Baxter Dawes, Paul cannot really have her. According to Weiss, Clara's unavailability mirrors Gertrude's unavailability. Weiss suggests that this is Lawrence's unintentional way of incorporating the Oedipus complex into Paul's relationship with Clara and Gertrude.

patriarchy and stamps out Paul's rebellious sexual desires that threaten to undermine Baxter's authority over his wife. By the end of the novel, Clara returns to Baxter and Paul must return to his mother and Miriam, but Paul's return does not signify advancement in his development.

Beards finds solace in the novel's conclusion, arguing that Paul's walk toward the city emphasizes his acceptance of life, arguing that by the end of the novel, "Paul's future, though Lawrence's tone is typically equivocal, seems assured" (215). But it is conceivable that Paul's acceptance of life does not necessarily reflect a positive self-development, as Beards suggests. In the novel's concluding paragraph, the narrator explains that Paul will not give in to the despair brought on by his mother's death, but Paul's walking toward the city reads more like a rejection of death than an embrace of adulthood: "[t]urning sharply, he walked towards the city's gold phosphorescence. His fists were shut, his mouth set fast. He would not take that direction, to the darkness, to follow her. He walked towards the faintly humming, glowing town, quickly" (464). The ending of the novel completely undermines the novel's earlier implied teleology. Gertrude's death throws Paul into a downward spiral: his scandalous and controversial relationship with Clara ends, and she returns to her husband, Miriam, seemingly Paul's final hope at a conservative and socially acceptable relationship, returns to the narrative, but Paul only has a fleeting interest in pursuing a marriage to Miriam.

Paul's professional life fades from the plot; early in Paul's life, Gertrude thought that it was very important for Paul to find a job and become a functioning member of the society, but after her death, Paul loses interest. Slowly, Paul's job becomes a less prominent feature in his life and the novel itself; as the job fades from Paul's life, it also

fades from the narrative. In the novel's concluding chapters, Paul has a tremendous revelation about his artistic project. After the death of his mother, Paul realizes that he has two options that can carry on his mother's legacy: he can marry and have children, the traditional hallmark of a youth's passage into adulthood, or he can pursue his artistic interest: "'But you can go on with your painting,' said the will in him. 'Or else you can beget children—They both carry on her effort—'" (456). Paul views his options as absolutely mutually exclusive, and in this moment, he resigns himself to Miriam: "He would leave himself to her. She was better and bigger than he. He would depend on her" (457). Following this thought, Paul looks at Miriam and wishes "her to hold him and say, with joy and authority: 'Stop now all this restlessness and beating against death. You are mine for a mate'" (462-3). Additionally, throughout this chapter, the narrator explains that Miriam has always thought of Paul as a child. In these instances, Lawrence depicts Paul as a man looking for surrogate mother, not a wife; in a sense, Paul slides backward, attempting to recapture the lost childhood and renounce adulthood.

In the novel's concluding chapter, after Paul decides that he will marry, he meets Miriam at the Unitarian Church on a Sunday evening. Miriam accompanies Paul back to his house, and the narrator explains that Miriam wants to take some time to rediscover Paul: "He had been gone from her for so long, she wanted to re-discover him, his position, what he was now. But there was not much in the room to help her. It only made her feel rather sad, it was so hard and comfortless" (459). Paul's empty room and old sketchbook become representative of his own personal emptiness. Miriam's desperate search for some indication that Paul has grown and made the transition from the adolescence to adulthood is ultimately in vain.

After some conversation of Clara, Paul asks if Miriam would marry him. She gives a puzzling response: "'Do you want it?'" Paul replies, "'Not much'" (462). As Gennep suggests, marriage is an important rite of passage for individuals, and it is a clear marker of the transition from adolescence to adulthood: "[t]he marriage establishes the girl and boy in the category of socially adult women and men, and nothing can take this from them—a fact that also applies to the widower and the widow" (144). A positive response to Miriam's question would surely put Paul on a path toward adulthood, but he decides to refuse; Paul refuses the transition and tries to preserve his youth.

Even after rejecting marriage, Paul asks Miriam, "'[a]nd without marriage we can do nothing?'" (462). Miriam says no and leaves shortly after. In his final rejection of marriage to Miriam, and her rejection of his illicit sexual provocations, Paul passively accepts the path of the artist, symbolizing an attempt to relapse or return to the youth that he fears lost. Through the novel's suggested teleological projection and the final rejection of Paul's teleological projection, Lawrence undermines the traditional *Bildungsroman* plot.

In *Sons and Lovers*, meaning results from the total rejection of a solution to an unfulfilled teleology. Lawrence's outright rejection of the protagonist's teleological projection calls the entire genre of the novel into question; if a narrative is not a series of events that combine and contribute to a significant end point, the traditional novel form must change. To be sure, Lawrence's *Sons and Lovers* is not the first or the only novel to question what it means to be a novel, but it does contribute to a larger conversation about form that several other modernist novelists take up in their own projects.

IV. The Legacy of the Modern *Bildungsroman*

> The whole world—it is a proof of the writer's remarkable strength—is broken and tossed by the magnet of the young man who cannot bring the separate parts into a unity which will satisfy him.
>
> - Virginia Woolf, "Notes on D. H. Lawrence"

While Lawrence offers a new approach to the *Bildungsroman* and a refreshing iteration of an old tradition, *Sons and Lovers* as a modern *Bildungsroman* is not without its faults. Lawrence's development of Paul Morel is striking in its emphasis on his contradictory impulses, which ultimately lead to his arrested development; Paul's anti-teleological development is especially striking in comparison with development in the classical *Bildungsroman*. However, later more *thoroughly* modernist iterations of the *Bildungsroman* make Paul's development seem very conservative. In this chapter, I will close this study with a consideration of the failures of Lawrence's project and how it points toward to stronger and more thoroughly focused modern *Bildungsromane*. Later writers like Joyce and Woolf embrace the anti-teleological development that Lawrence begins to use in *Sons and Lovers*, but both Joyce and Woolf make a more drastic and categorically modern effort to divorce their writing from Victorian influence.

When Lawrence wrote and published *Sons and Lovers*, Europe was just on the edge of World War I, the greatest threat to European civilization until that point. The Great War disrupted centuries of political traditions and wiped out an entire generation of young men in England. Modernism's well-known tropes (alienation, crisis of faith, and

destabilization of institutions) became truly epitomic of modern literature after the trauma of World War I, though earlier writers used them as well. In the case of Lawrence, Paul's development is riddled with moments of crisis and episodes of disillusionment, but Paul's journey from adolescence to adulthood occurs before the war. Despite writing this novel over a decade into the twentieth-century, at the time of this novel's publication, Lawrence did not have the historical context of the Great War to add to the complexity of this new modern *Bildungsroman*.

As a result, Paul is neither Stephen Dedalus nor Lily Briscoe; however, he is not David Copperfield either. Paul stands in a transitional space between the Victorian and the modern era that begins, as Woolf arbitrarily notes, around 1910, but the Great War in 1914 creates a sense of urgency and trauma that could not be understood before. Lawrence cannot incorporate the crisis of faith and the shattering of cultural totems that become so emblematic of modernism because, at the time of this novel's publication, the great shattering had not yet occurred.

As I have demonstrated in Chapter III, despite his insistence on Paul's individuality and independence from the values of his community, Lawrence still relies on a Victorian cultural framework to tell his story of development. For example, in Paul's sexual education, even after the married Clara seems to liberate him from the community's insistence and forcibly regulated sexual regulations, Paul returns to the compulsory marital framework to think about his relationship with Clara: "In the spring they went together to the sea-side. They had rooms at a little cottage near Theddlethorpe, and lived as man and wife" (400). Though Paul and Clara are clearly having an illicit

affair, Lawrence applies the vocabulary of marriage and spiritual union to their romantic retreat, and even Paul is caught up in the society's marital impulse:

> "Do you want to marry me?" he asked curiously.
>
> "Do you me?" she replied.
>
> "Yes—yes—I should like us to have children," he answered slowly.
>
> She sat with her hand bent, fingering the sand.
>
> "But you don't really want a divorce from Baxter, do you?" he said. (403)

For Paul, love and producing children are intricately linked to marriage, and even in Theddlethorpe, a kind of green world that separates Paul and Clara from the social and economic norms of the city, he cannot isolate sex from marriage. To have children, Paul feels that he must marry Clara; to marry Clara, she must divorce Baxter. Paul's word choice is of the utmost importance in this scene. Clara cannot simply *leave* Baxter; instead, she must *divorce* him. "Divorce" reinscribes the law of the community and highlights the extreme difficulty of forsaking the community's rules and regulations. As Paul stands on the beach in Theddlethorpe, he is at once literally and symbolically standing on the edge of the world he knows; he is on the brink of a new and truly revolutionary understanding of the connection between two lovers, but unfortunately he cannot escape his cultural framework. The community has successfully formed Paul's superego, the internalized and self-correcting mechanism that reels back his sexual desires and forces him to follow the community's behavioral guidelines.

Just three years later, Joyce captures a similar scene in *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man*. After Stephen returns to religion, he walks on the beach and spots a young girl gazing out toward the sea: "[h]er image had passed into his soul for ever and no word

had broken the holy silence of his ecstasy. Her eyes called to him and his soul had leaped at the call. To live, to err, to triumph, to recreate life out of life!" (145). Though Paul and Stephen are on beaches for different reasons, the location functions as a noteworthy connection between Lawrence and Joyce's work; if we take the beach to be a physical setting that marks the spot of transition, the place of potential revolution, we see Paul fail to truly break away from his traditions, but in Stephen, this moment on the beach is illuminating. After this walk on the beach, Stephen finally breaks away from the regulations of the church and his nation and can freely develop his artistic project, his theory of aesthetic. Stephen quite literally and figuratively leaves the confines of his community that the beach represents, but Paul's ties to his aging mother and his inability to imagine a world separate from the one he knows tie him to his family, community, and their cultural values.

In addition to Paul's inability to cross the boundary that protects the world he knows from the world he does not, *Sons and Lovers* also shows Lawrence's inability to unreservedly revolutionize the *Bildungsroman* in terms of gender. This thesis has hinted at the suggestion that in *Sons and Lovers*, Lawrence presents relatively flat female characters. Kate Millet makes this very argument in her chapter on Lawrence in *Sexual Politics*: "[t]he women in the book exist in Paul's orbit to cater to his needs: Clara to awaken him sexually, Miriam to worship his talent in the role of disciple and Mrs. Morel to provide…enormous and expansive support" (247).[13] While I do not fully embrace

[13] For more criticism regarding Lawrence's sexism, see Hilary Simpson's *D. H. Lawrence and Feminism* (1982) and Cornelia Nixon's *Lawrence's Leadership Period and the Turn Against Women* (1986).

Millet's argument, Lawrence's presentation of women in the novel is often extremely problematic.[14]

As I have discussed in Chapter III, over the course of the novel, Gertrude and Miriam become representative of the community that desperately tries to regulate Paul; Lawrence's showcasing of women as the standard bearers for a patriarchal social system that keeps them in a meek submissive role to men represents monumental and potentially irreconcilable concerns for the novel. Even in the novel's ostensible "new woman," Clara, a suffragette who willfully separates herself from her husband, practically plays the role of Paul's wife in her relationship with him until she eventually decides to reconcile with her husband and return to a domestic life. Lawrence defines Clara's character through her connections and relationships with men. In different ways, the novel's three main female characters, Gertrude, Miriam, and Clara, attempt to push Paul toward a realization of his place in society and an acceptance of social norms, but their own development is often truncated. Arguably, in Lawrence's later novels *The Rainbow* (1915) and *Women in Love* (1920), he makes a more concentrated effort to write about the development in women in the modern world, but in *Sons and Lovers*, Lawrence does not attempt to represent the particularity of female development in modernity.

In *To the Lighthouse*, Woolf offers a powerful story of female *bildung* in modernity. In Lily, Woolf directly addresses quickly fading notions that women are

[14] Throughout much of his body of work, Lawrence's misogyny is palpable, particularly during his so-called "leadership period" from about 1919 to 1925 which produced *Aaron's Rod* (1922), and *Kangaroo* (1923). Additionally, blatant sexism often characterizes his late essays; "Matriarchy" (1928) and "Cocksure Women and Hensure Men" (1929) are two telling examples. However, in *Sons and Lovers*, Lawrence presents Gertrude as a compellingly three-dimensional character with her own distinct sense of individuality.

incapable of the same development and artistic maturation as men. Woolf, unlike Lawrence, reveals the patriarchal scaffolding that structured Victorian England and continues well into the twentieth-century: [i]t was the women's fault. Women made civilization impossible with all their 'charm,' all their silliness" (88). In Woolf's novel, women are not simply vehicles for the ideology of the state; the transitional moment from Mrs. Ramsey's generation to Lily's marks the rejection of such a simplistic characterization of women in the modern novel. Woolf defines Lily's development as an artist in direct contrast with Mr. Charles Tansley's persistent and misogynist refrain: "Women can't write, women can't paint" (88). Lily paints in defiance to Tansley and eventually, though painfully, achieves her artistic maturity. Though she knows that her painting will not receive the attention and respect that it deserves, creating her art is essential to defying the established order:

> Why then did she do it? She looked at the canvas, lightly scored with running lines. It would be hung in the servants' bedrooms. It would be rolled up and stuffed under a sofa. What was the good of doing it then, and she heard some voice saying she couldn't paint, saying she couldn't create, as if she were caught up in one of those habitual currents in which after a certain time experience forms in the mind, so that one repeats words without being aware any longer who originally spoke them. (162)

Lily's artistic maturation marks the culmination of this scene, when she can finally move past Tansley's critical voice in her head and create. She looks at her canvas and has her revelation: "It would be hung in the attics, she thought; it would be destroyed. But what did that matter?" (211). And with a final stroke of her paintbrush, Lily finishes her

painting and achieves her vision. Lily's vision is purely artistic, and the economics of mass produced art does not affect Lily's perception of her artistic project as it does for Paul. Woolf creates a female protagonist who successfully realizes her vision for the sake of art itself; Paul's vision is never so clear.

Where Lawrence tries to hold on to the past, to infuse the *Bildungsroman* with vitality and vigor, Joyce and Woolf ostensibly leave the *Bildungsroman* behind and embrace the *Künstlerroman*, the novel of artistic development. Though earlier English *Bildungsromane*, *David Copperfield* and *Sons and Lovers* included, feature protagonists who are also artists, the modern English *Künstlerroman* grounds itself firmly in theories of the aesthetic and makes artistic vision paramount to the protagonist's *bildung*. For Stephen, his artistic vision allows him to transcend his family, his homeland, and even his God; similarly, Lily's artistic vision defines a permanent break from tradition. The patriarchal voice in her head is silenced, and she can fully embrace her artistic sensibilities without compromising for the sake of tradition or acceptance.

While *Sons and Lovers* makes a substantial break from the Victorian *Bildungsroman* tradition, at this point in Lawrence's career, he is utterly incapable of breaking away from some of the Victorian era's most characteristically deep-rooted customs, namely courtship and marriage, strictly patrolled gender roles, and the commodification of art. Lawrence's novel, however, is an attempt to revitalize the *Bildungsroman* genre and make it a suitable vehicle for development in the modern world; it is Lawrence's effort to make the *Bildungsroman* new. *Sons and Lovers* should be read as Lawrence's early endeavor to liberate the English *Bildungsroman* from its outmoded Victorian iteration, and while it does not compare in sophistication or

complexity to Joyce and Woolf's later iterations of the tradition, *Sons and Lovers* should be regarded for Lawrence's willingness to incorporate modern psychoanalytic theories, show Paul's fractured consciousness, and revel in the tension between Paul and the turn of the century English community.

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